

PINK

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Saturday, December 10, 2016

City in
comeback
victory



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More woes for Koeman

WATFORD 3 EVERTON 3
Stefano Okaka scored his first goals for Watford as former Saints boss Ronald Koeman watched his Everton side continue their miserable run with a 3-2 defeat at Vicarage Road.

The Italian striker conjured up a cheeky back-heal to cancel out Romelu Lukaku's opener for the visitors.

Sebastian Prodl then headed Watford ahead and Okaka, whose previous Premier League goals came during a loan spell with Fulham six years ago, made it three before Lukaku pulled a late one back.

After their bright start to the season, Ronald Koeman's Everton have now won just once in 11 and saw their opponents climb above them in the table.

Yet it all appeared to be going to plan for Koeman when, having weathered some early Watford pressure, they took the lead with little fuss in the 17th minute.

Gareth Barry floated the ball over Miguel Britos to the lurking Lukaku, who expertly brought the ball down before tucking it past Heurelho Gomes for his eighth goal of the season, and his first in five matches.

The Belgian dedicated the strike to Yannick Bolasie, holding his fingers up to signify his team-mate's shirt number 14 after the winger was ruled out for the campaign through



Ronald Koeman

injury.

Watford found their equaliser 10 minutes before half-time after Okaka swept the ball out to Nordin Amrabat. Not for the first time, Amrabat had the measure of Ramiro Funes Mori before whipping in a low cross which Okaka, having escaped the attention of Ashley Williams, met with a stylish back-heal at the near post.

Troy Deeney, stuck on 99 goals for Watford for the last two and a half months, had a chance to raise his bat before the break when Adlene Guedioura stood a cross up to the back post. But, with the landmark perhaps weighing on his mind, the Hornets skipper skewed an unconvincing volley wide.

Nevertheless, Watford took the lead on the hour when Prodl nodded in a free-kick from Jose Holebas.

With Everton wobbling, Maarten Stekelenburg produced a stunning save to keep out a Britos header – only for Okaka to head in Holebas' resulting corner at the near post.

Deeney followed up in the hope he had finally reached three figures, but replays showed Okaka's header had crossed the line.

Lukaku pulled one back with a header from Aaron Lennon's cross with five minutes remaining, but, despite a late rally, there was no way back for Everton.

PINK SAINTS

Big-money star

By Simon Carter



ONE of the biggest enigmas in Saints' history returns to St Mary's for the first time this weekend.

Uruguayan playmaker Gaston Ramirez was just 21 when he arrived at St Mary's from Italian club Bologna towards the end of the summer 2012 transfer window.

Then chairman Nicola Cortese had used his Italian contacts to sign him for a club record £12m.

The most Saints had ever paid for a player was the £7m spent on Jay Rodriguez a month earlier.

Prior to that, Saints' biggest transfer fee was the £4.1m paid to Derby for Rory Delap in 2001.

That was why £12m was a huge price for Saints to pay in August 2012.

Especially for a young player who had never appeared in the Premier League before.

Saints manager Nigel Adkins hailed Ramirez's arrival.

"A lot of hard work has gone in from the football club with a lot of negotiations behind the scenes to get this deal done."

"Great credit to everyone because we have a young, exciting talent joining us who is one of the best around."

"The chairman has gone and backed this deal big-time with the financial outlay, and what we have got is one of the most exciting prospects in world football coming to St Mary's."

"There is a lot of ambition at the football club and we are all delighted that Gaston is going to come and join us."

Let's repeat some of those words – "one of the most exciting prospects in world football."

That is some hype, and big words to hang around the neck of a 21-year-old South American.

As we all know, the hype wasn't followed by the glory. Not at St Mary's, anyway.

Ramirez played fewer than 50 league games in four seasons at Saints, prior to being released on a free last summer.

With wages and other costs factored in, Ramirez had cost the club around £20m – and they got nothing back on their expensive investment.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at the enigma that was Gaston Ramirez as he prepares to play for Middlesbrough against Saints this weekend.

Ramirez was 19 when he made his Serie A debut in September 2010, going on to make 25 appearances for Bologna in 2010/11,



scoring four goals.

In 2011/12 he struck eight times in 33 Serie A appearances - a fine strike rate for a midfielder.

In July 2012 he was in England playing for Uruguay in the London Olympic football tournament.

Playing alongside Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani, Ramirez opened the scoring in a 2-1 win

over the United Arab Emirates in Uruguay's opening group game at Old Trafford

He also started the second game, a 2-0 defeat to a Senegal side containing Sadio Mane.

Ramirez made a third start when Great Britain beat Uruguay 1-0 at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

Daniel Sturridge struck the

only goal that night, current Saints left back Ryan Bertrand was also among the GB starters, and then Saint Jack Cork came on as a late sub.

On signing for Saints, Ramirez had to wait a fortnight to make his debut.

It was the proverbial baptism of fire- coming on as a half-time sub for Steven Davis at The Emirates

PINK PINK SAINTS

with a lot of hype



Gaston Ramirez scores against QPR at St Mary's in March 2013.



Gaston Ramirez scores his first Saints goal at Everton in September 2012.



with Saints trailing 4-1.

They shipped two more to suffer what remains the club's highest league loss since returning to the top flight four and a half years ago.

Handed his first start the following week against Aston Villa at St Mary's, Ramirez had an instant impact.

After Rickie Lambert had can-

celled out Darren Bent's opener, Ramirez produced a sublime through ball for Nathaniel Clyne to finish.

Saints went on to win 4-1, recording their first Premier League points since 2005 after beginning life back at English football's top table with five straight defeats.

Despite a thigh injury ruling

him for a while, Ramirez went on to become something of a regular in his first season at Saints, making 20 league starts and another six off the bench.

He wouldn't play anywhere near as regularly in his next three seasons on the south coast.

Ramirez also netted five goals in 2012/13.

His first came on his second

start, in a 3-1 loss at Everton, while his first St Mary's goal helped Adkins' men beat Alan Pardew's Newcastle 2-0 in November.

Ramirez scored again on New Year's Day, seizing on a loose ball and drilling past Wojciech Szczesny to give Saints the lead against Arsenal at St Mary's.

Saints were on a revenge mission, given their hammering in north London earlier in the season, but had to be content with a point when Guly do Prado diverted Theo Walcott's free-kick into his own net.

Still, the point was enough to take Saints out of the relegation zone.

Ramirez's two remaining goals that season also came at St Mary's – the consolation in a shock 2-1 loss to Harry Redknapp's lowly QPR and in a 1-1 draw with West Ham.

By then, of course, Adkins had been sacked and Mauricio Pochettino appointed in his place.

The Argentine kept faith with his fellow South American, with Ramirez remaining a regular.

Ramirez's last major of his debut campaign was to elbow his future Saints colleague Shane Long in the face after coming on as a half-time sub against West Brom at St Mary's at the end of April.

Continued on page 4

Gunners top of the table

ARSENAL 3 STOKE 1

Arsenal came from behind to go top of the Premier League table at least until Sunday lunchtime and extend their unbeaten league run to 14 league games with a 3-1 win over Stoke at the Emirates Stadium.

Birthday-boy Charlie Adam opened the scoring from the spot after Granit Xhaka elbowed Joe Allen in the face but Arsenal got themselves back into the game with five minutes left of the first half through Theo Walcott's close-range finish.

The Gunners took the lead shortly after half time with Mesut Ozil heading over Lee Grant, with substitute Alex Iwobi adding the third, which sees the hosts go top of the table ahead of Chelsea, who host West Brom tomorrow.

Arsene Wenger made six changes from the side which beat Basel 4-1 on Tuesday, while Allen came in for the injured Jonathan Walters in the Stoke starting XI.

After a slow start it was Stoke, who were looking for their third league win in a row, who had the best chance of the opening 10 minutes as Marc Muniesa's shot whistled just over the crossbar.

The Gunners suffered a blow just on 25 minutes when Shkodran Mustafi was forced off due to a hamstring injury.

The centre-back was replaced by Hector Bellerin, himself back in the squad for the first time in more than a month after overcoming an ankle problem, with Gabriel shifting into the middle of the back four.

The new-look defence was soon under pressure and two minutes later referee Lee Mason awarded the visitors a penalty after Xhaka's clumsy elbow on Allen. Adam stepped up to send Petr Cech the wrong way.

But, with only a few minutes of the first-half remaining, the Gunners clicked into gear. Bellerin's cross into the box fell to Walcott, who slotted it past goalkeeper Grant to get his 100th club-career goal.

It did not take long after the break for Arsenal to start dominating the game and, on 50 minutes, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's long-range cross found Ozil unmarked in the box and, spotting that the Grant was off his line, the German headed the ball over him.

Arsenal made sure of the points in the 75th minute thanks to substitute Iwobi who slotted home.



Theo Walcott



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Swans stun Black Cats

SWANSEA 3 SUNDERLAND 0

SWANSEA relieved the pressure on under-fire manager Bob Bradley with an emphatic 3-0 home victory over fellow strugglers Sunderland.

Bradley had come into the Premier League basement clash under severe scrutiny with only one win in his seven games in charge and Swansea at the foot of the table.

But the Swans surged to their biggest win of the season with a second-half penalty from Gylfi Sigurdsson and, for the second successive home game, a Fernando Llorente double.

The win not only takes Swansea off the bottom, but moves them up three places outside the relegation zone, with the Black Cats now bottom.

After a sterile first period, the game turned on a 51st-minute incident when Jason Denayer handled Wayne Routledge's cross.

Sigurdsson sent the spot-kick down the middle for his sixth of the season.

Three minutes later the excellent Sigurdsson turned provider as Llorente swept home a corner directed low into the penalty area.

Jordan Pickford produced fine stops to prevent Modou Barrow and Jordi Amat, but the Sunderland goalkeeper had no answer when Llorente met Jefferson Montero's cross 10 minutes from time.



Gylfi Sigurdsson

Llorente soon left the field to a hero's reception, the Spanish striker's work for the day done.

Swansea enjoyed some promising moments early on, with Barrow surging past opponents and Llorente heading wide when under pressure at the near post.

Sunderland saw out the opening 20 minutes and then threatened to seize control, with Victor Anichebe providing a focal point in attack and Jermain Defoe seeking space between defenders.

The pair combined to create Sunderland's best chance of a cagey first period when Anichebe collected Pickford's punt and sent Defoe down the left-hand channel.

Defoe beat Alfie Mawson and broke into the area, but his angled shot just cleared the crossbar much to Swansea's relief.

Sebastian Larsson might have opened the scoring moments later but for Defoe taking the ball off his toe in front of goal, while Swansea danger was restricted to Sigurdsson's exquisite set-piece delivery.

Mawson and Amat both headed over inviting Sigurdsson free-kicks. Swansea nerves were stretched by Defoe's shot whistling past a post, but Denayer's error opened the door for Swansea and there was going to be only one winner.

PINK SAINTS

Enigmatic star

By Simon Carter

from page 3

Marc-Antoine Fortune, who had earlier scored as the Baggies took a 2-0 interval lead, shoved Ramirez in the face in the ensuing melee and ref Robert Madley, taking charge of his first ever Premier League game, issued both players with red cards.

Saints were down to nine men when defender Danny Fox was sent off, and Long completed the visitors' 3-0 success after that.

Ramirez received a three-match ban, ruling him out of the remainder of the season.

The following season, 2013/14, he didn't make a single league start before New Year's Day – all of his nine outings coming as a second half sub.

As a further illustration of how he had slipped out of favour, he started all three of Saints' League Cup ties when Pochettino fielded a weakened side.

Still, goals against Barnsley and Bristol City showed what he could do given a chance.

There was another illustration shortly after Christmas when Ramirez jumped off the bench to lash in Saints' consolation in a 2-1 loss at Everton.

That helped win him his first league start of the campaign at home to Chelsea on January 1, but Saints were poor and slumped to a 3-0 defeat.

By the time the Saints next played in the league Ramirez was back on the bench, and his next five appearances were as a sub.

Restored to the starting lineup for Norwich's visit in March, Ramirez was taken off - Guly coming on - when Saints were 2-0 up around the hour mark. They eventually won 4-2.

His third and last league start of the season came at home to struggling Cardiff in mid-April.

Saints slumped to a dismal 1-0 defeat and Ramirez was hauled off in the 66th minute and replaced by young striker Sam Galagh.

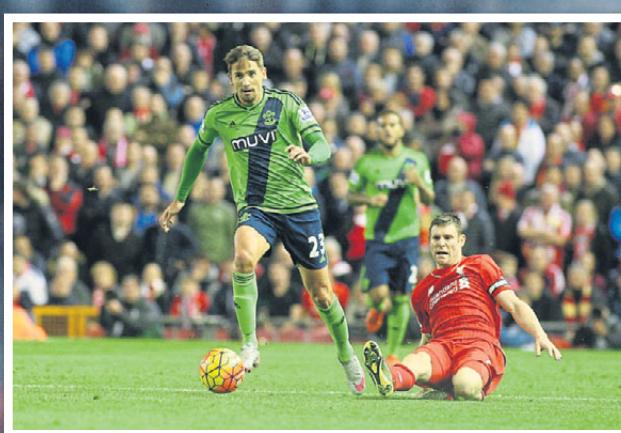
He didn't know it, and the crowd didn't know it.

But that was the last Premier League game Gaston Ramirez – once Saints' record signing – would ever start for the club.

It was claimed that Pochettino's departure and Ronald Koeman's arrival would give Ramirez the new start he so desperately needed.

It didn't.

Koeman brought him on in the 89th minute of a League Cup tie at Millwall in August 2014, and



Gaston Ramirez in action for Saints at Anfield last season, left.

Ramirez celebrates a goal for Saints against Arsenal in 2012/13,



the player made another second sub appearance in a 3-1 win at West Ham – Koeman's first league victory.

But that was it. That was the end of his supposed 'new start' under a new boss.

A few days later Ramirez was leaving St Mary's, heading to Hull on loan for the rest of the season.

To start with, his time on Hum-

berside mirrored his time on the south coast – with his first six Premier League outings all coming as a sub.

Handed his first start against Mauricio Pochettino's Tottenham, Ramirez could have used it as a chance to show his former boss what he had missed.

Instead, Ramirez received the second red card of his Premier

League career five minutes into the second half.

The Uruguayan was dismissed after an innocuous clash with Jan Vertonghen ended with Ramirez flicking out a foot at the Spurs defender, with Hull boss Steve Bruce complaining that the decision changed the game.

Bruce blamed the linesman and Vertonghen for Ramirez's red

PINK SAINTS

who frustrated



Gaston Ramirez, right, scores against Hull last Monday and, main picture, celebrates.



card and, as a result, "ruining the spectacle."

Hull were leading at the time, but ended up losing 2-1.

Ramirez scored his first Hull goal on Boxing Day in a 3-1 win at Sunderland.

It proved to be the only goal he netted in 22 league outings – only half of which were as a starter.

Ramirez' last game for the Ti-

gers saw him come on as a sub in a 1-0 home win over Liverpool.

It didn't save the club from relegation, however.

Returning to Saints ahead of the 2015/16 season, Koeman again spoke of Ramirez being in his plans.

"Gaston is back and he's doing the pre-season with the team," the manager revealed in July 2015.

"It's the first time he's had a holiday, because he had some years that he played for the Uruguay national team without holidays.

"He had a lot of injuries, and that makes it more difficult for Gaston.

"I hope now that he will do a good pre-season without any injury and to show his qualities, because still he's a very good foot-



ball player."

So he might be, but Koeman still didn't play him that often.

After sub outings at MK Dons in the League Cup and at Anfield in the league, Ramirez made his sole start under Koeman in a League Cup win over Aston Villa at St Mary's.

That wasn't the start of something, though.

Instead, Ramirez had to wait two months for his next appearance – as a sub at West Ham. And his final Saints outing came off the bench at Norwich in early January 2016.

It was his 48th Premier League appearance for the club – of which 25 had come off the bench. And, of his 23 starts, 20 had come in his first season.

Ramirez obviously needed a fresh start (again) and this time it came in the shape of Middlesbrough, chasing promotion from the Championship.

Boro boasted a great defensive record, but boss Aitor Karanka needed extra creativity to give them a boost.

Ramirez duly provided it, and Boro went on to clinch automatic promotion.

Following his release by Saints in the summer, it was a no-brainer for anyone connected with Boro to welcome him back.

The Middlesbrough Gazette's football writer, Jonathan Taylor, was certainly a huge fan of a player who had shone so briefly at St Mary's.

Writing in the Gazette after Ramirez had rejoined Boro permanently, Taylor enthused: "A cut above anybody else on the pitch".

"I forgot how many times I wrote that last season, when lavishing praise on Gaston Ramirez.

"The statistics say he scored seven goals in 21 appearances – a decent return from midfield. But that barely scratches the surface. He was the team's conductor, dictating the tempo and adding a sprinkle of fairy dust to Boro's attacking play.

"He allowed his teammates that extra yard of space. He gave opposition defenders that little bit more to worry about.

"And he did so with refreshing ease – an effortlessness that not every footballer possesses. At times, it was a joy to behold."

Taking a few games to get match fit – unsurprisingly, given how little he played at Saints – Ramirez got better as the season went on. "He went on to score five goals in eight matches through March and April to put the club within touching distance (of automatic promotion), with his brace against Huddersfield earning him special praise from Karanka," Taylor wrote. *Cont on page 6*

Tigers tamed by Campbell

HULL 3 CRYSTAL PALACE 3
FRAIZER Campbell returned to haunt Hull as he scored a late equaliser to earn Crystal Palace a 3-3 away draw.

Hull had appeared set to move out of the Premier League's bottom three as Adama Diomande and Jake Livermore's goals overturned Palace's 2-1 lead.

But Campbell, the player who once helped Hull to promotion but had turned down a return to the club, was booted by Hull fans throughout his warm-up and had the last laugh with his 89th-minute equaliser.

Robert Snodgrass' penalty had given Hull the lead in a quiet first half but the game exploded to life in the second period as both teams deployed three-man defences.

Christian Benteke levelled from the spot before Wilfried Zaha's stunning strike put Palace ahead.

Mike Phelan switched to a three-man defence and saw his side enjoy the better of the first half.

But none of Hull's defenders were able to stop a surging run from Zaha in the fifth minute, but the winger was denied a spectacular goal by a fine save from David Marshall.

Diomande should have opened the scoring in the 17th minute. Livermore's clever pass released the striker but he could only fire straight at the onrushing Hennessey.

Hull did take the lead 10 minutes later in controversial circumstances.



Wilfried Zaha

Again, it started with Robertson causing problems down the left and his cross found Snodgrass who took a tumble under Scott Dann's challenge despite minimal contact.

Referee Mike Jones pointed to the spot and Snodgrass stepped up to score his fifth of the campaign.

Alan Pardew responded to Hull's first-half dominance by also switching to a back three, with Zeki Fryers coming on for the ineffective Andros Townsend.

And seven minutes after the interval Palace were level. Snodgrass' clumsy challenge brought down Zaha and Benteke stepped up to level the scores.

Zaha then produced the standout moment of quality to put Palace ahead in the 70th minute.

The winger collected the ball on the edge of the area, turned both Sam Clucas and Huddlestoke inside out before letting rip with an unstoppable drive.

But Palace's celebrations were cut short two minutes later when Diomande received Maguire's pass, turned past his marker and scored.

With 13 minutes remaining Livermore strode into the visitors' penalty area and slotted into the bottom corner.

It appeared to be the winner, but Campbell had other ideas against one of his former sides.

Return of the enigma

from page 5

"I don't like to say names as always the most important thing is the team, but today it's impossible not to say anything about Gaston," Karanka said.

"He was the player who changed everything, the first 20 minutes we didn't play in the way I like as we looked like we were playing for nothing, but two moments from him changed everything."

Boro went into the last game of the season at home to Brighton needing to avoid losing to go up automatically. If they lost, the Seagulls would go up instead.

Boro secured the point they needed to return to the Premier League, while Brighton were condemned to the playoffs, despite ex-Saints loanee Dale Stephens cancelling out Christian Stuani's early opener.

The promotion winning celebrations were dampened, though, by an horrific injury to Ramirez.

Stephens was sent off within minutes of netting the leveller after his studs-up challenge left Ramirez on the floor with a huge gash to his shin.

Taylor went on: "Re-signing Ramirez this summer was a no-brainer for Boro for so many



Gaston Ramirez and Kieran

reasons.

"The one argument levelled against him is that he's never truly turned it on in the Premier League. He failed to live up to his £12m pricetag at Southampton, and equally struggled while on loan at Hull City."

"That may be fair, but Ramirez has now rediscovered his swagger."

"He's back in the Uruguay side after years in the international wilderness, and now - like so many of Boro's new signings this summer - has a point to prove in the top-flight."

"He coasted through some Championship games last season. It was effortless - he glided around flat-footed defenders. He boasted an nonchalant confidence, and it rubbed off onto his teammates."

Impressive words indeed.

Ramirez has carried that form into the Premier League, his headed winner against former club Hull last Monday his second goal of the season.

He has also provided two assists - compared to only three for Saints in his 26 appearances in 2012/13.

Perhaps Mauricio Pochettino was wrong, therefore? Perhaps Ronald Koeman was wrong as well?

Saints fans could well tomorrow see a totally different Gaston Ramirez to the one they remember.

PINK CHERRIES FOOTBALL

Hendrick belter

TURF Moor claimed a fifth victim of the season as goals from Jeff Hendrick, Stephen Ward and George Boyd sent a battling Bournemouth home empty handed from Burnley.

The Clarets deserved their win, with Hendrick's sumptuous dipping volley the pick of the goals, and have now taken 16 of their 17 points in Lancashire, a record to envy at either end of the table.

Benik Afobe had made it 2-1 in first-half injury-time and Bournemouth briefly threatened to mimic their late comeback against Liverpool last week when Charlie Daniels buried brilliantly in the 90th minute, but this time they fell short and lost 3-2.

The match marked a return for Eddie Howe to the side he managed briefly and unremarkably before Sean Dyche and also the first ever Premier League contest between the sides.

For entertainment value alone, the next instalment has plenty to live up to.

Bournemouth rewarded Afobe and Ryan Fraser for their goals in last week's thrilling win with starting places, Jack Wilshere instead of Howe went 4-4-2.

Burnley had England international Tom Heaton back in goal after two games out, with Steven Defour returning in midfield and Sam Vokes replacing Andre Gray up front.

The first 10 minutes were bright and open, Nathan Ake's back pass putting Artur Boruc under pressure at one end while Afobe's snap shot drew Heaton into action at the other.

The game, seemingly, was anybody's but by the 17th minute Burnley had raced into a 2-0 lead.

Hendrick's glorious finish made it 1-0 after Heaton pumped the ball upfield and Matt Lowton picked out the Irishman with a controlled first-time pass.

The club's record £10.5 million signing took two deft touches to control the ball, spotted Boruc off his line and lifted his volley crisply into the top corner.

For a team with Burnley's budget, it was the kind of contribution that justifies a rare splurge.

Bournemouth were rattled and paid the price as the deficit doubled from Defour's corner.

The Belgian found Ben Mee with an outswinger and though Boruc pushed a powerful effort back off his line, Ward was on hand to prod home.

The Clarets continued to impose their game plan unchallenged, Michael Keane winning Heaton's long free-kick with his head before nodding goalwards and drawing a diving save.

For their part Bournemouth lost discipline, with a few messy challenges and little attacking

BURNLEY 3 CHERRIES 2



structure.

Eventually Afobe won a free-kick at the edge of the area but Heaton did brilliantly to palm Adam Smith's dipping effort over the bar.

Howe's side did get on the

scoresheet before the break, though, Fraser's bustling run and Simon Francis' cutback leaving Afobe unmarked in the centre of the box.

He duly tucked his shot into the corner and sent the visitors in

with a spring in their step.

A similar chance presented itself early in the second half, Fraser's dribbling again pulling Burnley out of shape, but this time Afobe dragged wide.

Both sides went to their bench

PINK CHERRIES FOOTBALL derails Cherries



with the game still up for grabs, Ashley Barnes and Gray on for the hosts and Bournemouth sending for Wilshere.

Barnes had two good chances, flashing wide moments after coming on then half-heartedly head-

ing when onside and in a scoring position.

Gray might also have settled it, flashing a volley directly at Boruc after breaking through the middle. It was left to Boyd to add a third for Burnley, finishing with

a drive across across goal having collected Gray's clever back heel.

The game ended in a flurry of activity - Marc Pugh with a penalty claim against Lowton, Boruc saving well from the impressive Gray and Afobe seeing a late ef-

fort chalked off for handball.

The pace finally looked to have relented when Daniels took everybody by surprise from a corner and lashed a drive high into the top corner, though it was a final moment of excitement.

Howe rues early goals

AFTER the match Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe said: "The most disappointing thing is we had given ourselves a mountain to climb going two goals down so early on, even though I felt like we controlled the game."

"Those two goals we can rue but we can't keep putting ourselves in the position where we have to chase the game like that."

"They put too many balls in our box but we got a lot of balls into their penalty area too but from our point of view there were too many wasted deliveries and bad decisions."

Burnley boss Sean Dyche said: "I am very pleased. We are still learning as a side and we can definitely play better but the mentality was brilliant from my players."

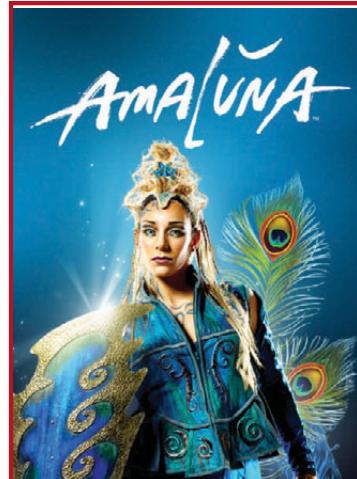
"Bournemouth are a great side - Eddie Howe is doing a fantastic job and we knew they would come here feeling confident with their shoulders back after a strong performance against Liverpool but we had a bright start and threatened their back line which I think we did brilliantly."

"I am super pleased with my subs today - I don't usually say something like that but they came on and changed the game and I thought they were outstanding."

"It's hard to kill teams off in the Premier League. The challenge is evident but there is clarity to the thoughts of the players and we will take that into the next matches."



Eddie Howe



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NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

WINCHESTER CITY 3 PAULTON 2

Two reds as Lavvy suffer a shock loss

LAVERSTOCK & Ford lost top spot in Sydenhams One after a shock 1-0 defeat to Andover New Street.

Luke Cairney's strike on 26 minutes condemned Lavvy, who had two players dismissed late on, to their fourth defeat of the campaign as they slipped into second.

It dropped them one point behind leaders Hamble Club – 2-1 winners over Baffins Milton Rovers – who have two games in hand.

Lavvy created several half-chances in the opening quarter before falling behind.

And despite heavy pressure and significant possession, the visitors were frustrated.

Things went from bad to worse with 12



Joe Sanger

minutes remaining when a mistimed challenge on Jamie Smith sparked a 22-man melee.

In the wake of the incident, Smith and Joe Sanger were dismissed as Lavvy finished with nine men.

Co-managers Liam McConnell and Robbie Lakeman said: "It's one of those games as a manager you just wish you'll never experience."

"We dominated the entire game, were dealt some crazy decisions against us and conceded a soft goal on a rare break."

"We just looked unsure of ourselves in front of goal, which was a first for us."

"Of course it's a setback but let's see how we bounce back."

Hamble Club clocked up their 17th league win of the season at Baffins' expense.

Coby Wilson and Nathan Lynch got the goals.

Briggs hits winner as City fight back

Wendy Gee



JOE Briggs set up the equaliser and plundered the winner for Winchester City as they came from behind to beat 10-man Paulton Rovers 3-2 in the Southern One South & West.

City included on-loan Poole Town right-back Lewis Tallack for his first league start, while Brendan Norris – back from loan at Fleet Town – got the nod in goal.

The opening three minutes were mainly played in Winchester's half, but the moment the Citizens strung a decent move together they nearly scored – Howard Neighbour showing good strength to tee himself up for a shot which clipped the outside of the post.

Another chance presented itself on 14 minutes when Paulton's Elliott Gibbons was penalised for hand-ball, but Stuart Mott's header from Joe Briggs' free kick was well wide.

Just when City looked to be exerting a measure of authority, they found themselves a goal down after being prised open on the break with 15 minutes gone.

One simple ball picked out Reeko BEST on the left and the speedy No 11 powered away from his marker before coolly slotting the ball past Canadian keeper Norris.

Another free-kick came City's way on 25 minutes for a foul on Adam Tomasso but Paulton keeper Kieran Hodges dealt well with Andy Jenkinson's curler.

Jenkinson it was who made the telling delivery for Winchester's 26th minute equaliser, picking out Craig Feeney who held off his marker before calmly cutting away his 19th league and cup goal of the season.

Feeney could have had another as he darted in from the left on 33 minutes, but he overran it slightly and the keeper saved.

With the rain lashing down Norris was penalised for handball outside the area on 36 minutes.

Jake Mawford's free-kick was well struck and on target but Norris got two strong hands to it and pushed it over.

Paulton threatened again on 45 minutes when great work by pint-sized left-back Kailan Gould



Craig Feeney in action for Winchester. Left, Adam Tomasso slides in

set Best on his way again. But in rounding the keeper, Best pushed the ball fractionally too far ahead of him and, having resisted the temptation to lunge in on his man, City defender Mott was able to clear.

The visitors were reduced to 10 men in first-half stoppage time when Jordan Ricketts needlessly went in two-footed on Tomasso and the referee had no hesitation in showing him a straight red.

Half-time: Winchester City 1 Paulton Rovers 1

As City set about trying to make their man advantage tell at the start of the second-half, both Stuart Green and Neighbour passed up decent chances on a difficult,

greasy surface.

Instead, it was 10-man Paulton who scored against the run of play. Tallack could count himself desperately unlucky to be pulled up for a foul on Mawford and it was the Paulton No 9 who beat Norris from the spot.

It looked like being one of those afternoons for City when Feeney's next attempt cleared the bar, but persistence paid off on 65 minutes when they bagged themselves an equaliser.

Briggs' delivery from the left was cleverly flicked in by his former Petersfield team-mate and neighbour for 2-2.

Tomasso's left-foot screamer was expertly turned away by

Hodges as City went all out for a winner and then somehow Feeney's close-range effort, set-up by Green, crashed down off the underside of the bar.

Hodges then smothered a deflected shot from sub Taz Roberts on the line before Green met Feeney's delivery with a first-time volley that flew wide.

Winchester kept banging on the door, however, and finally battered it down on 84 minutes when the excellent Green kept the ball in on the left byline and cross for Briggs to slide home at the far post for 3-2.

The undermanned visitors didn't make it easy for City and themselves had chances in the closing stages with towering defender and skipper Josh Ford having one header cleared off the line and another well held by Norris.

PINK

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Club seek boss to replace Straker

By Wendy Gee



ILL health means Andy Straker is no longer in a position to pilot AFC Totton up the non-League pyramid.

But his dearest wish as he reluctantly announced his departure as chairman this week was that someone else would seize the opportunity to help local non-League's "sleeping giant" achieve its true potential.

Just three years after justifiably putting their faith in Straker to help them through their financial woes of 2013/14, Totton – third to bottom of the Southern One South & West – have a vacancy for a new leader.

It comes in the saddest of circumstances with 50-year-old Straker confirming this week that he has been diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Roy Edwards, his trusty vice-chairman, added the jobs of chairman and treasurer to his extensive list of duties while Straker was undergoing hospital treatment.

But ultimately Edwards had too much on his plate and he too is standing down after getting a promotion in his day job.

He will, however, be around to ensure things run smoothly until December 21's special general meeting when Totton members can elect a new chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer.

Admitting that leaving his beloved Stags was the last thing he wanted, Straker said: "I don't want people thinking I'm running



Former AFC Totton Chairman Andy Straker

away. I wouldn't be making this decision if I wasn't ill.

"We're down the bottom and that's certainly not where I wanted to leave it, but it got too much for me. I just haven't got the energy."

"I can't help the club going forward, so it's no good me just sitting there with a grand title."

"AFC Totton is a big club, it's a sleeping giant."

"Hopefully someone will step up to become chairman at the gener-

al meeting but, if there isn't anyone, maybe a businessman will step in and do it."

"They're a great bunch at Totton, from management through to supporters, and to not be able to be part of that on a Saturday afternoon isn't great."

"But, touch wood, I'll get my health back and will start supporting the club again."

Where the double departure leaves new team boss Louis Langdown and his player-assistant

Adam Wilde remains to be seen.

After some six weeks of searching, Totton finally named Langdown as permanent successor to Steve Hollick in mid-November.

But, less than a month after taking on the job, the former AFC Bournemouth head of sports science is unsure where the Stags will go from here.

"We'll listen to the volunteers who run the club and see what comes out of the meeting," said Langdown. "There's lots to clear up and we'll assess things in the coming week or two. Andy's health comes first and this is a time to praise and thank him and Roy for all they've done."

"This is a big hiccup but it's not derailed myself and Adam yet."

Because of his illness, Straker has only met Langdown twice, but admitted: "It doesn't feel right walking away having just brought Louis in, but I have to think of myself."

"I've got to concentrate on getting my health back and having some sort of life."

Paul Maiden, one of the club's three trustees and the facilities/stadium manager, is confident Totton have enough good people to get by.

He said: "Wayne Mew is happy to sort football matters out, Shaun Hinton is still doing his work as secretary and Sean McGlead is around to help as well."

"The ground staff are still here and, along with the football management, we'll soldier on as best we can until the meeting takes place."

"We're a members' club and I hope some people within that membership will want to take these jobs on."

Star loanee Surridge in bad injury

POOLE Town boss Tom Killick says being without "inspirational" Sam Surridge until the new year is "horrific" for us and horrific for him.

The striker, who has scored seven times since his loan move from Cherries at the end of August, has a badly broken thumb that is expected to sideline him for up to six weeks.

"Sam has a bad injury to his thumb. It's broken to such an extent it will need surgery," reported Killick. "That's horrific for us and horrific for him. He was absolutely inspirational and his time here was working so well for both parties."

"He was establishing himself, showing his potential and really enhancing our effectiveness. So to be without him for a long period is a big blow."

● CHRISTCHURCH boss Ollie Cherrett was drawing inspiration from Poole Town ahead of this weekend's clash with Baffins Milton Rovers.

Priory have won their past five games – and lost only once in 11 – on their way to fourth in Sydenham Wesse One.

Cherrett said: "I've not been surprised. We have good players and they are desperate to do well."

"In any level of football you have good runs and bad runs. Hopefully, we got our bad run out the way early."

"Look at Poole Town over the past three or four years. When you're winning it becomes a habit and it's very hard to get out of that habit."



Sam Surridge

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PINK**NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL****Bennett's hat-trick bonanza**

JUSTIN Bennett's extraordinary hunger for goals shows no sign of diminishing.

The former Andover and Gosport Borough hotshot netted his fourth hat-trick of the season on Tuesday as Salisbury tucked into a pre-Christmas goal feast at Bishops Cleeve.

The Whites did all the damage in the first half, coming away handsome 5-0 winners in the Southern One South & West.

Bennett's treble arrived in a blistering ten-minute spell at Kayte Lane.

With Salisbury already leading by Brandon Mundy's opener, he struck his first on the half-hour before looping a header over stranded keeper Matt Wieczorek.

Seven minutes later,



Justin Bennett

Bennett netted another header for his 16th goal of the campaign.

On-loan Sutton United marksman Tommy Wright added a fifth before the break and, thanks to some tidy second-half defending, Salisbury came away with their first league clean sheet since mid-October.

It was just the tonic they needed following last Saturday's 3-1 loss at table-topping Hereford.

A delighted Bennett said: "It was a great win and much-needed after our last two results."

"On a personal level it was nice to get the hat-trick after missing some good chances recently, but I'd have settled for a scrappy 1-0 win as the three points were important."

The result pushed Steve Claridge's men back up to eighth, five points off the play-offs, ahead of this weekend's home game against Shortwood United.

Wembley dream still alive for Keizer-Burrows

Myles Keizer Burrows.

TEAM Solent boss James Taylor hopes Myles Keizer-Burrows will be stepping on a pitch again this season - preferably at Wembley Stadium!

The Team Solent full-back had a heartbreaking start to the Sydenhams League campaign, breaking his leg in two places during the season's Sydenhams Wessex League opener against Alresford Town, which was subsequently abandoned.

Although he is nowhere near ready to don his boots again, the stricken player is back studying

at Southampton Solent University and making huge strides forward with his fitness.

And, with Solent now flying the flag into the FA Vase last-32 following last weekend's 1-0 win over Bodmin Town, Taylor would love to see him striding onto the Wembley pitch when the final comes around on May 21, 2017.

Working hard

"Myles is back at Uni and working hard on his fitness," reported Taylor.

"He's not going to be around playing for a while, but he's a really fit lad and he expects to play again this season."

"His operation went well and he's able to do some light training."

"He's quite optimistic of being back in the not too distant future, so there's a chance we might see him again before the end of the season."

"It would be nice for him to walk out on the pitch at Wembley if we get there!" he smiled.

Solent shape up for last 32 Vase tie

By Wendy Gee



ON an afternoon when both Blackfield & Langley and Beaminster went tumbling out of the FA Vase, it was left to the A-star Students of Team Solent to carry Wessex hopes through to the fourth round.

They got the scoring business done early with defender Curtis Thorn heading home the winner after just 28 seconds at Test Park to see off visiting South West Peninsula League champions Bodmin Town 1-0.

Solent kept their shape and discipline well for the rest of the game and, come Monday, were rewarded with another home tie against Croydon FC in the last 32 on Saturday, January 7.

Croydon - 3-2 winners against Glebe - are mid-table in the Southern Counties East League Premier Division and have reached the fourth round for the third time.

As relative newcomers to the competition, Solent have never been this far before - their previous best a first round exit in 2015/16.

Students boss James Taylor said: "We're delighted to be at home. It makes a big difference because our pitch suits our passing game."

"Croydon are half-way up their league but they've done well in the Vase, so we've got to assume they're a good side."

Prior to dispensing with Glebe, Croydon had beaten Loxwood, Mile Oak, Bracknell Town and Solent's Wessex rivals Andover



Team Solent's Curtis Thorn celebrates after scoring the winning goal against Bodmin

Town en route to round three, but the trip to Test Park will be only their second away tie.

With attacking talent like Jesse Waller-Lassen, Tobi Adekunle, Tyrell Mitford and Silvano Obeng at their disposal, it's the offensive side of Solent's game that normally grabs the headlines.

But, against Bodmin, it was the quality of their defending that stood out.

"In the second half, in particu-

lar, it was inevitable a side of Bodmin's quality would have a lot of the ball, but I knew that if we kept our shape, sat there and didn't let them get too many shots away, we could catch them on the break," said Taylor.

"Defensively we kept a very good shape and it was only in the dying embers that keeper Bradley Banda was really called upon."

"But he made a quite magnificent point-blank reaction save in

a goalmouth melee to prevent the tie going to extra time."

Team Solent's win should not be underestimated. Bodmin had won 16 times in an unbeaten 19-match run stretching back to an August FA Cup defeat.

Solent kept up the good work on Monday, dismantling Hamworthy 7-0 in the Sydenhams Premier with goals by Jesse Waller-Lassen (2), Tobi Adekunle (2), Thorn and Jamel Wiseman.

PINK

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Late comeback sinks Bemerton's Vase hope



Graham Kemp

BEMERTON let slip a two-goal lead as they exited the FA Vase 3-2 at the hands of Wiltshire rivals Melksham.

The last-64 tie was going to plan for Graham Kemp's charges when they led 2-0 thanks to early goals from Jack Slade and Scott Joyce.

Gary Higdon halved the deficit from the penalty spot in the 21st

minute, but ex-AFC Totton midfielder Jake Burgess should have put the tie to bed for Bemerton when he rounded the keeper but, with the goal at his mercy, shot wide of the target.

That miss proved costly in the closing stages as Town, who are riding high in the Toolstation Western Premier League, struck twice

in a frantic five-minute spell.

Ricky Hulbert levelled the scores on 82 minutes and the comeback was complete when Higdon netted the winner.

Bemerton, who had come through tricky ties against the likes of Plymouth Parkway and Cullompton, would have travelled to Bristol Manor Farm in the last 32.

Magpies are now on the up and up

By Wendy Gee



ALRESFORD Town were continually being told they were too good to reside in the bottom half of the Sydenhams Premier – and now they are starting to prove it.

Tuesday's excellent 2-1 result at Bemerton made it three league wins in a row for Richard Luffman's men and six Wessex games unbeaten.

The Magpies' 3-2 FA Vase exit at Corinthian still rankles with the boss, who insists: "We should still be in it. We lost to a terrible side."

But as far as league fortunes are concerned, Luffman couldn't be happier.

"We were unlucky not to beat Portchester (1-1, away), but we've hit a bit of form in the league," he said.

"We're now breathing down the necks of the top eight, which is where we want to be."

Cup distractions did little to aid Alresford's cause earlier in the season, but now Luffman has got himself a settled squad – and a posse of goalscorers to boot – he suspects the only way is up.

"All of a sudden we've got four lads who look like scoring regularly," he said.

"Steve Hall's scored 12, which is a good return from a left-sided midfielder. Only Brockenhurst's Mark Barker has got more from midfield."

"We've converted Sam Burt to a left winger and he tore Bashley to shreds last Saturday (in a 5-3 win). Tom Sands is also scoring and John Cole has been a revelation since he came in from Blackfield."

"We only signed him a month ago and he's scored four in five games."

Having had Cole's first-half opener at Bemerton wiped out by



Alresford boss Richard Luffman

an 84th-minute penalty, Alresford looked destined to return home with just one point.

But Jack Wiffen – a late call-up to the squad – had other ideas, marking his debut with a winner two minutes into stoppage time.

Defensively Lukas McCarty was a rock at centre-back and, at 19, he's a perfect fit for one of the division's youngest defences.

"We've got Rob Flooks who's 22 and Lukas, Scott Munro and Sam Burt are all 19," said Luffman.

"In fact we've only got two play-

ers over 25 in the whole squad – John Cole's 27 and Simon Everett's 29.

"Lukas and Rob Flooks have built a great partnership and given us a proper base to build on."

Luffman's preference for a tight, settled squad has inevitably spawned a few casualties. Babe Bojang has joined Whitchurch United, Callum Drake has returned to QK Southampton and Mo Nyang is off to find first-team football elsewhere.

"Five or six players have moved

on and I've purposely not signed anyone because I want to keep a settled side together," the boss explained.

"I probably signed a couple too many at the start of the season and we couldn't get a run of results together."

"We were in a false position, everyone kept telling us that."

"But now we've got the same 14 or 15 involved every week, it's had a massive impact. We were the better side at Bemerton and thoroughly deserved the win."

Town for sale a 'stunt'

BASINGSTOKE Town have dismissed reports of the club being put up for sale on eBay as "a misguided publicity stunt."

While it is true that Town chairman Rafi Razzak will be stepping down at the end of this season, the eBay listing was not sanctioned by the north Hampshire club and has since been taken down.

The man behind the stunt was supporter Simon Hood, a former club director, who said: "We're keen to find a buyer who shares our affection for Basingstoke Town FC."

"The club has a rich history of success, based in a town of over 175,000, the prospective supporter base is huge."

"Perhaps our new owner is an existing supporter. If they're not already, I have no doubt they will be"



Rafi Razzak

once they've met everyone involved in the club.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for somebody to become a legend here in Basingstoke."

Before the listing was removed, the highest bid stood at over £65,000 and an enthusiastic Hood said: "We have already received a couple of private messages from around the world for potential bidders."

The problem with Hood's plan, however, is that the mid-table Southern Premier club is not his to sell.

An official Basingstoke Town FC statement clarified: "There is no truth in the rumour that Basingstoke Town Football Club is up for sale on eBay."

"This was a misguided publicity stunt by a former director and fan who does not own the club and is not in a position to sell it."

"The listing has been removed."

PINK

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Boro return for Cureton

VETERAN striker Jamie Cureton has linked up with Farnborough again following his departure from Eastleigh.

The 41-year-old found the net for Boro last Saturday against Hanwell Town, but his ninth-minute equaliser counted for nothing as the north Hampshire club lost their unbeaten home league record in a 3-2 Southern One Central defeat.

Experienced Football League goal-getter Cureton had originally joined Farnborough to get some game time under his belt following his release by Dagenham & Redbridge.

He had already netted eight times for Spencer Day's men when National League outfit Eastleigh offered him the chance to climb the pyramid again in September.

Cureton went on to make a handful of appearances for the Spittfires, scoring one goal, before leaving in the wake of Ronnie Moore's departure.

He tweeted: "Gutted to say my time @EastleighFC is over new manager coming in new ideas wish the club all best this season and in the future. #newchapter."



Jamie Cureton

Joy of six for City

LAST season's beaten finalists Winchester City are safely through to the Hampshire FA Senior Cup quarter-finals.

Ian Saunders' men advanced to the last eight with a 6-1 goal feast at the manager's old club Fleet Town on Tuesday.

City were already leading by a 20-yard Stuart Green strike when Fleet goalkeeper Dease Kerrison was forced off with a finger injury and handed over the gloves to player-boss Craig Davis.

Despite that setback, the north Hampshire hosts drew level through Rob Carr, but their joy was short-lived. Within a minute Craig Feeney had restored Winchester's lead and, but for an acrobatic save by Davis from his overhead kick, would have struck again before the break.

Two early second-half goals from Howard Neighbour and Joe Briggs effectively settled the contest, but City were far from finished.

Feeney added his second of the night before making way for young sub IK Hills, who scored within a minute of coming on.

Sholing had one of the toughest tasks, away to an AFC Portchester side on the crest of a 15-game unbeaten run.

Looming

But it was the Boatmen who prevailed 2-0 – albeit that it took until the 86th minute for the deadlock to be broken.

With penalties looming, Sholing were awarded one when Byron Mason took a high boot to the face. There was a delay of two minutes while the skipper had his forehead bandaged, but Lee Worts kept his cool to send 'keeper Cameron Scott the wrong way for his eighth goal in nine appearances.

That knocked the stuffing out of Portchester, who were caught by a 90th-minute breakaway goal from sub Nick Yeomans.



Winchester City's Craig Feeney, right.

AFC Totton roared into a 3-0 lead against Horndean – and then so nearly gave it all away.

Mike Gosney was central to all three first-half goals, scoring the third himself after setting up Nick Watts and Jack Vallis.

Horndean, though, staged a spirited fightback through Sam Smart and Rob Tambling.

The Deans might even have equalised, but Totton's on-loan Havant & Waterlooville 'keeper Charlie Searle denied them with a magnificent point-blank save to clinch the Stags' first win under manager Louis Langdown.

Basingstoke Town are also quarter-final-bound after a slender 1-0 win over Cowes Sports.

With seven minutes gone, Aar-

on Jarvis was sent tumbling in the area and, although Yachtsman's keeper Edd Hatt managed to parry Aaron Redford's penalty, Jarvis netted the rebound.

AFC Stoneham are the lowest ranked side left at the last-eight stage.

The Sydenhams One outfit ousted Premier Division visitors Fawley AFC 1-0 courtesy of an Ash Ledger penalty.

They are joined in the quarter-finals by National League South side Gosport Borough who overcame Lee Peacock's mix 'n' match Eastleigh side 3-1 at the Aerial Direct Stadium.

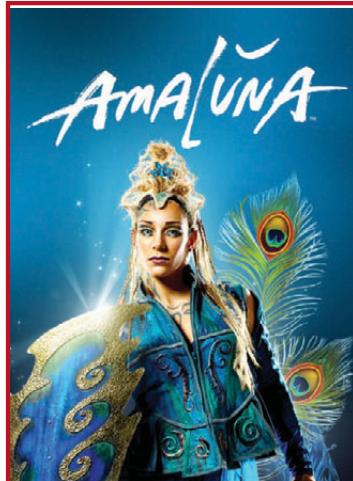
Trailing to a late first-half Adam Brice header, the Spittfires succumbed to a second from Eastleigh 1.

leigh old boy Ben Wright before James Granger replied from the penalty spot.

Josh Carmichael's deflected effort ensured it was Gosport who progressed.

Lymington Town suffered a 4-0 defeat at Hartley Wintney for whom ex-Saint Sam Argent plundered a hat-trick.

Hampshire Senior Cup third round results: Fleet Town 1 Winchester City 6, AFC Totton 3 Horndean 2, AFC Stoneham 1 Fawley AFC 0, AFC Portchester 0 Sholing 2, Bashley 0 AFC Bournemouth 4, Basingstoke Town 1 Cowes Sports 0, Hartley Wintney 4 Lymington Town 0, Gosport Borough 3 Eastleigh 1.



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PINK

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Old pals' act key to Tubbs signing

By Wendy Gee



MATT Tubbs says his friendship with ex-Eastleigh player/assistant manager Craig McAllister was a factor in him joining Sutton United.

Along with McAllister, Tubbs was part of the Crawley Town side that lost 1-0 at Manchester United in the FA Cup fifth round in front of 75,000 fans at Old Trafford in 2011.

Since then the ex-Salisbury City striker's career has taken him to AFC Bournemouth, Portsmouth – including a disappointing loan spell with Eastleigh last season – and Forest Green, from where he joined Sutton on a permanent deal last week.

That Crawley-style cup magic has now followed him to Gander Green Lane with Tubbs scoring on his debut as the Us overcame Cheltenham Town 2-1 last Saturday to book their ticket to the third round.

Unity

Speaking ahead of that game, Salisbury-born Tubbs, 32, told SUFCtv: "There's always one lower league team that has a run in the cup and hopefully this year it can be Sutton again."

"There's a good group of lads here. I've played with a few of them before and there's a good sense of unity in the camp which goes a long way."

"I know Craig McAllister really well from my time at Crawley and he was a key factor in me signing here."



Matt Tubbs

Sutton etched their name into FA Cup folklore with a string of giant-killing acts in the late 80s and early 90s, most notably a 2-1 victory over First Division Coventry City in 1989 – two years after the Sky Blues had won the tournament.

Their prize for toppling League Two outfit Cheltenham last

weekend, thanks to Roarie Deacon's 96th-minute winner, is a third round tie at home to AFC Wimbledon, who Tubbs played for in 2014-15 prior to joining Portsmouth.

Welcoming Tubbs to Gander Green Lane, Sutton's former Eastleigh boss Paul Doswell said: "Matt has a proven goalscoring

record at this level and I've been interested in signing him for a while. The fact that he's eligible for the FA Cup is a real bonus."

Tubbs spent part of this season on loan at Woking, registering three times in six appearances. He made 12 appearances for parent club Forest Green, scoring twice.

Walker's 300th game

MAGPIES' talisman Nathan Walker played his 300th game for Dorchester Town in their 2-1 win over Biggleswade last Saturday.

The powerful defender, who has also proved effective as a striker this season, aptly picked up the man-of-the-match award for his exploits at centre-half.

Dorchester player-boss Mark Jermyn is homing in on his 700th club appearance after coming off the bench for his 699th game last Saturday.

● PREMIER League giants Chelsea will continue to play their development games on Hampshire soil.

The Blues have confirmed that their development teams will carry on using Aldershot Town as their home venue in 2017/18, taking the agreement into a fifth season.

Over the last three-and-a-half years, Chelsea's young guns have played in a range of domestic and international youth tournaments at the Shots' EBB Stadium, including home matches in the FA Youth Cup - a competition they have won for the past three years.



Nathan Walker, left.



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PINK**NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL****Blackfield hit back**

FAREHAM were the unlucky fall-guys as Blackfield & Langley took out their FA Vase frustrations on the Creeksiders on Tuesday.

Having had their Wembley hopes shattered 5-0 at Exmouth, it was essential the Watersiders kept themselves in the Sydenhams Premier title hunt with a bold statement at Cams Alders.

They did just that as goals from Luke Winsper (3), Carl Preston (2) and Sam Wilson (2) subjected Fareham to a landslide 7-0 defeat, raising Blackfield to third in the table.

Unlike at Exmouth where a couple of early chances went begging, Glenn Howes' men were clinical this time round. "Four days in football, eh?" said assistant boss



Luke Winsper

Chris Farrell.

"The difference was that we took our chances this time. By five to eight we were 3-0 up.

"It could have been more, but the Fareham 'keeper (Luke Douglas) played out of his skin. He was superb.

"The most important thing was that we won. If we're to have any say in the title race we've got to be better than we have been," he stressed.

The return of defender Sam Poole from suspension made a significant difference as did Kane Daysh's and Ash Howes' inclusion.

Top scorer Jamie White, who has been sidelined with a hernia-related problem, went on for the final 15 minutes.

"There were as many positives to come out of the Fareham game as there were negatives at Exmouth," said Farrell.

"It was imperative we won."

Devon jinx strikes Blackfield again

By Wendy Gee



THE scenic county of Devon is fast becoming a graveyard for Blackfield & Langley's FA Vase dreams.

Last year the Watersiders came to grief 6-0 at Plymouth Parkway and there was a horrible feeling of déjà-vu last weekend as they again came off second best at Exmouth Town, this time by a bruising 5-0 scoreline.

Having made the running for the opening 20 minutes, Blackfield fell behind to Exmouth's first real attack on 21 minutes when they failed to clear a corner, allowing the quirkily-named Ace High to find the bottom corner.

They scraped a Jordan Charron shot off the line before the South West Peninsula League hosts doubled their advantage three minutes before the break when that man Charron volleyed home a far-post cross.

If Blackfield came out hungry to get back into the third round tie, they didn't really show it.

Unstoppable

Instead, Charron struck again with an unstoppable 30-yarder into the top corner and, with no sign of a fightback evident, the Devon hosts rubbed salt into the visitors' wounds.

Their fourth and fifth goals – both headers from corners – were scored by Cameron Vere and Nathan Cooper in the 80th and 85th minutes.

In Blackfield's defence, they had some bad fortune prior to the game when their highly-rated centre-back Joey Byrne chipped an ankle bone in training, ruling him out for four to six weeks.

The Watersiders were already without Byrne's suspended defensive sidekick Sam Poole, while player-coach Tim Sills was also serving a ban and both Ash Howes and Jamie White were injured.

Those absences, coupled with Charlie Knight hitting the bar 10 minutes into the tie, indicated that Lady Luck had not travelled with them.

But B&L assistant boss Chris Farrell insisted Exmouth deserved maximum credit for their victory.

He said: "No excuses, Exmouth worked their socks off and fully deserved the win. They were stronger than us and won more personal battles.



Joe Byrne of Blackfield, left

"As soon as they scored, there was only going to be one outcome.

"I'd watched them two weeks before and I knew it was going to be a tough game. It would have been tough even if we'd had all our players available.

"They're big, strong, hungry and physical and it won't be easy for anyone who goes down there.

"When we needed luck early on, it deserted us. We should have been 1-0 up through Sam Wilson in 20 seconds and then Charlie Knight hit the bar.

Midgets

"Exmouth scored from their first attack and it was backs against the wall after that.

"You can't play against a side like that and not compete. They outplayed us in all areas and defended like men possessed.

"It was giants against midgets.

"Would it have been any different had Joey, Pooley and Sills played? Who knows? But it doesn't matter now, it's gone – and good luck to Exmouth."

PINK

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Killick pleased as Dolphins improve

By Wendy Gee



TOM Killick insisted he could "live with the loss" after watching Poole Town beaten 2-1 at National League South rivals Dartford last Saturday.

Despite having nothing to show for their efforts, the seventh-placed Dolphins were much improved on their meek FA Trophy exit at the hands of Weymouth four days earlier.

"Two really basic mistakes saw us gift them (Dartford) two goals. That was the only disappointing thing for us as the performance was much better than Tuesday and we were far and away the better side," said Killick.

"We went into the game with morale quite low within the squad, which is understandable as the Weymouth defeat won't be forgotten for a long time and will stay with us all season."

Fortitude

"With that in mind, when you go two goals down the worry is you might capitulate, but the players showed fortitude, fought back really well and we feel unlucky not to have got a result."

"The response from the group was good as we came away from home to a side on a really good run and dominated for long periods."

"Two mistakes don't make a bad afternoon and we can live with the loss as the players couldn't have put in any more."

Mistake

Duane Ofori-Acheampong headed the Darts in front on 20 minutes and, moments later, Luke Wanadio profited from a defensive mistake to slot past Poole 'keeper Nick Hutchings.

Ex-AFC Totton forward Luke Roberts reduced the arrears before the break but, despite domi-



Poole Town boss Tom Killick

nating for long periods, the Dolphins could not find an equaliser.

Killick's men suffered another defeat on Tuesday, beaten 4-3 at home by Southern League neighbours Wimborne Town in the Dorset Senior Cup.

Abdouli Baggie's opener was

quickly eclipsed by Wimborne's Toby Holmes, Connor Cocklin and Jack Lovell.

Poole rallied for 3-3 through Roberts and Marvin Brooks before a see-saw tie tipped back in Wimborne's favour.

With the Dolphins down to 10

men following the dismissal of Ryan Case, Holmes plundered an 89th-minute winner to seal the Magpies' semi-final spot.

● Got a local league football story for us? Email words and images (jpeg pictures please) to echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Defeat casts shadow on Powell celebration

DARREN Powell was handed the captain's armband for Newport IoW's game at Brockenhurst last Saturday in the Sydenham Division.

The gesture was made in recognition of Powell's 500th appearance for the Isle of Wight club.

Chairman Stuart Ross said: "Darren is an inspiration to all our up-and-coming young players. Many congratulations to him."

Unfortunately for Powell, Brock tainted his big day by inflicting a 3-2 defeat on their visitors, extending the Islanders' win-less run to nine games.

Port were planning to honour and congratulate Powell on his milestone appearance ahead of today's home game against Sholing.

New in at St George's Park is 19-year-old midfielder Ryan Thomas, signed from Hornedean.

More to come after win

ROMSEY Town boss Andy Samuels believes there is more to come from his side after their 3-1 win at Pewsey Vale last Saturday.

He said: "I'm pleased with the result and parts of our performance but I know we're capable of much more.

"It was a difficult game but one we probably made more difficult than it should have been.

"The playing surface certainly didn't help either side but we didn't control the game after taking a 2-0 lead.

"We lost our way a little, especially in the second half but, having said that, I felt we were still fully deserving of our win and probably by a bigger margin."

A brace from Dan Fox and a third goal in as many games for Josh Harvey earned mid-table Romsey a second consecutive victory in Sydenham One.

"I'm delighted for Foxy who took his goals well and having Josh (Harvey) back in the set-up has given us an extra dimension," added Samuels.

"To be able to give Darryl (Phillips) and Harry (Draycott) minutes following long-term injuries was a real bonus for us too."

The downside was a late dismissal for Zak Pickett who reacted to a nasty, ill-timed challenge. Both players were red-carded.

● Have you got a local football story for us? If so, email words and pictures - jpeg images are the best - to echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Alternatively, contact the Daily Echo sports desk on 02380 424515.



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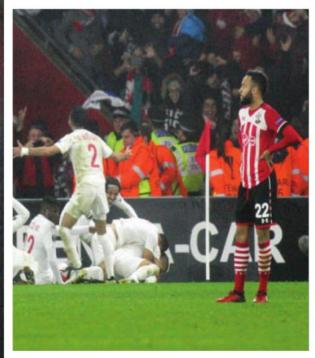
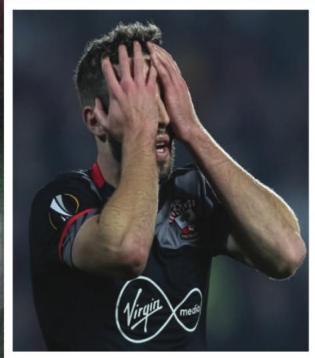
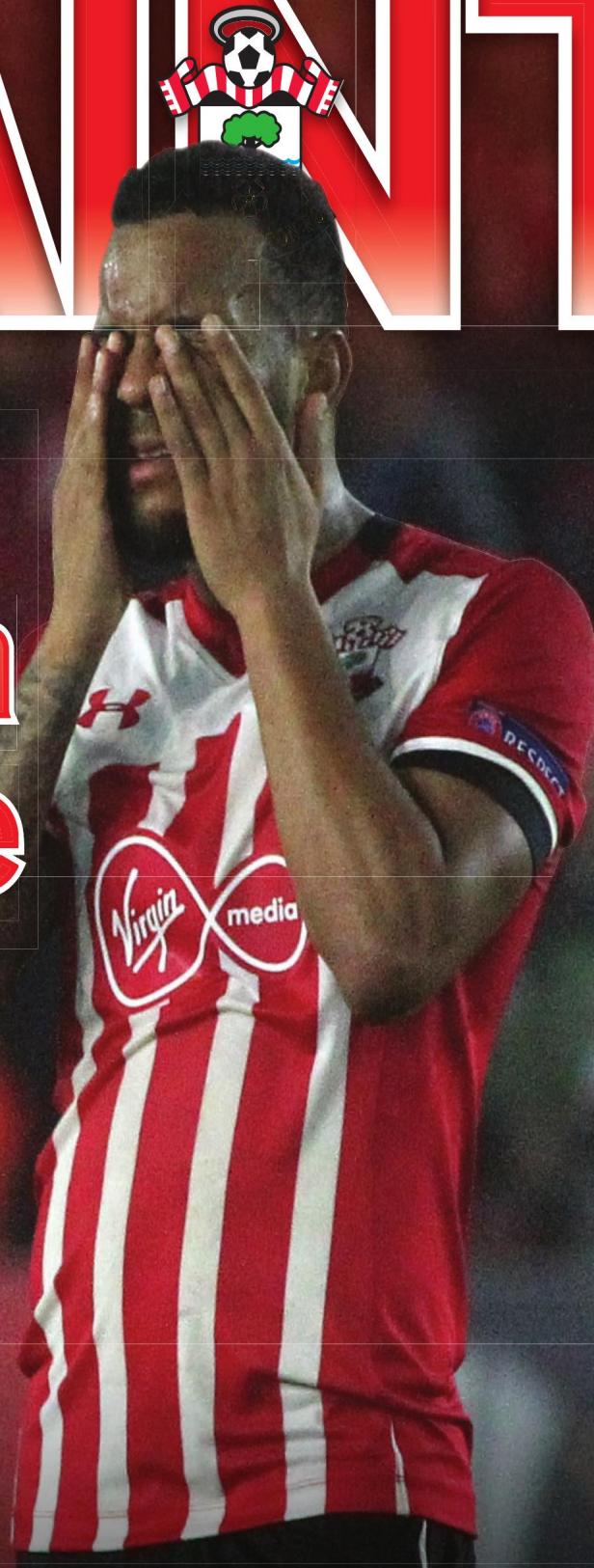
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SAINTS

in the
Europa
League

eight-page
pull-out



Where did it all go wrong?

Puel tactics to blame, say fans

CLAUDE Puel's rotation system and tactics have been blamed for Saints' miserable Europa League exit.

Concerned supporters have hit out at the Saints boss in online postings to the Daily Echo website and on social media.

There have even been calls for Puel to be sacked after the club failed to qualify for the knockout stages.

Here are a selection of the many posts at dailyecho.co.uk ...

SaintBobby: We all know that Saints should have qualified for this group, even with the weakened team we have this season. We have not scored the goals, and that is because we do not have enough players who can score goals.

However, what is different this year is obvious. A new manager may have lost some of the big guns, but he changed our style and has rotated the team religiously.



Claude Puel.

I do not profess to be a big football brain, but I reckon that most can see this has not worked. So now I am concerned about our PL programme. Because we do not score goals, players again might leave and then how is all this affecting the confidence of the team.

Dave74: Once again, long periods of possession, dominant football, no goals.

A good strike from the opposition - game over. Not one of their players were better than ours, they just managed to capitalize on their single chance.

We crossed the ball countless times with no height in the box, no strong shots from outside the box, their keeper was rarely tested.

We won every 'second ball', passed and passed but delivered nothing. Had we got the 0-0 draw we would've said it was a solid performance.

Continued on facing page

PINK SAINTS

Sympathy runs

By Simon Carter



CLAUDE Puel was never going to be allowed a honeymoon period at St Mary's.

Not after he had been left a squad containing all but three of the players who had helped Saints finish higher in the Premier League than ever before.

Not when expectations had - rightly or wrongly - been raised among the fanbase to a higher level than ever before.

Saints had finished eighth, seventh and sixth in successive seasons in one of the most competitive leagues on planet earth.

Being realistic, that was a magnificent achievement for a club of Saints' stature.

Even more so when so many crown jewels had been sold - Lambert, Lallana, Shaw, Lovren, Schneiderlin, Clyne.

Last summer brought more of the same - Mane, Wanyama and Pelle all tempted away by 'bigger' clubs offering the chance of winning big trophies and receiving bigger salaries (or, in the latter's case, just the salary).

I wrote in these pages last August that Saints' constant selling of their star players was not Puel's fault.

In a way, it's also unfair that he has to carry the weight of the fans' increased expectations on his shoulders.

He didn't sell Mane, or Wanyama, or Pelle.

But he also didn't sign a proven striker to replace Mane or Pelle, who between them scored 22 league goals in 2015/16.

That IS his fault, and the fault of people like Les Reed who should have known the areas in Saints' squad that needed strengthening, even if the new manager didn't.

Fans and journalists don't always know everything, even though we like to think we do.

But it was patently obvious to most seasoned Saints watchers that the club required extra firepower heading into the 2016/17 campaign.

Sadly, those that warned of potential problems have been proved spot on.

Charlie Austin's latest shoulder injury is not Puel's fault.

But the lack of options open to him certainly is.

The manager should have most sensible Saints' fans' sympathy for having to contend with a huge run of games across three competitions in his first few months in English football.

But Puel has not helped himself, and Thursday's miserable Europa League exit was a classic



Three of the six Saints teams that lined up in the Europa League this season. Skipper Jose Fonte was absent from all of them.

case in point.

Finally, for the home game with Be'er Sheva, he fielded a strong XI - though, bafflingly, one still without his captain, Jose Fonte.

That was after leaving the likes of Austin, Steven Davis, Oriol Romeu, Ryan Bertrand and Fonte out of previous group ties.

History will show Saints failed to progress in the Europa League because they could not keep a clean sheet against the Israeli League champions.

In reality, they failed to qualify because Puel failed to grasp the importance of the tournament



- either to the club, the fans, or even to his own players - in the previous group matches.

I don't know which one is the most worrying.

Excuse me, but can anyone explain some logic to me?

Fonte was left out of all six Europa League ties, but after the first five came straight back in for the following Premier League game.

Almost certainly he will be back against Middlesbrough this Sunday.

Why?

Because the accepted reason is

you play your strongest teams in the Premier League. Obviously.

Why do you play your strongest teams in the league? To finish as high as possible. Again, pretty obvious stuff.

And, if you finish high enough, you qualify for Europe.

Well, Saints ARE in Europe. Well, they were until Thursday.

All that work to qualify for the Europa League, all that effort.

Gone. Wasted, even.

'Wasted' is not too strong a word either.

What is the point in qualifying for the Europa League if you're

PINK PINK SAINTS

thin for Claude



Saints boss
Claude Puel

not going to take it seriously? Puel will say he did take it seriously.

He will repeat his mantra that he doesn't know his strongest starting XI, that he has to ensure players have sufficient rest time in between the hectic fixture list.

In short, he has to manage his squad the best he can.

As a result, he has to prioritise. No-one is saying they would want to see Saints win the Europa League and be relegated to the Championship.

But, at the same time, fans would have expected Puel to take

the club's European adventure more seriously than he did.

A lot of the supporters certainly took it seriously, spending hundreds of pounds - probably thousands in some respects - to follow the team to Be'er Sheva, to Inter Milan, and to Sparta Prague.

In return, they had to watch three below-strength Saints teams fail to score a single goal.

Those fans who travelled to Israel, to Italy, to the Czech Republic, clocked up over 8,000 miles ... and Puel 'rewarded' them with apparently sterile tactics and some of the club's best players either on

the bench or back home in England having a rest.

For the tie at Sparta Prague, Austin (top scorer), Romeu (best midfielder this season), Bertrand (England international full back) and Davis (Northern Ireland captain) were all on the bench. Fonte (Euro 2016 winner in the summer) was again totally absent.

Result - miserable performance, hardly any attacking play to cheer the fans who had travelled, and a 1-0 loss.

Last Thursday, Puel fielded a far stronger XI, but again fans were left questioning the tactics.

Again, excitement was lacking. (And Saints fans have always been brought up on attacking football, it's part of the cub's DNA).

To think Saints would have qualified with a 0-0 draw - through to the knockout stages having scored in just two of their six group games!

As it turned out, the club paid the price for Puel's negativity - both in terms of selection and tactics.

Again a fairly rare moment in the club's proud history - a European campaign - was (needlessly) ended amid huge disappointment.

Last season's Europa League jaunt, where Saints lost in a play-off to the Danish champions, felt like a huge anti-climax. Fair enough, for that is exactly what it was.

But this feels even worse.

An even bigger let-down, an ever bigger anti-climax.

Claude Puel now has to deal with the fall-out of the Europa League exit in terms of trying to win back some of the fans who have lost faith in him.

That could be harder than trying to win games without injured top scorer Austin, and that alone is going to be bloody hard with the personnel at his disposal.

I had sympathy for Puel, handed the onerous task of trying to continue Saints' progress when, in many ways, they had punched above their weight in recent times.

Saints have enjoyed a meteoric rise in the last few years, from rock bottom of the third tier to the top six of the Premier League and European nights.

Great memories have been created.

In fairness, though, apart from the win against a below-strength Inter side, none of those memories have been created on any of those European nights.

I have little sympathy now with Puel, not after the way he treated the Europa League.

This is Southampton FC we are talking about. They are not Arsenal or Chelsea or any of the Manchester clubs who can generally rely on European football more often than not.

Saints have only ever qualified for Europe on nine occasions in almost 50 years, half a century.

These occasions, when they do come along, must be treasured. They must certainly be taken seriously.

They should be memorable nights under the floodlights.

What they shouldn't be are miserable anti-climaxes.

That is why I haven't got much sympathy for Claude Puel, and I don't expect too many Saints fans will either.

Time to go?

from facing page

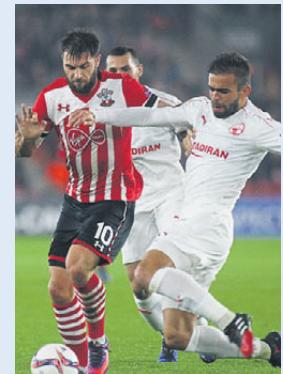
mike saint: Time for Puel to go. He has no idea of team selection and watching Saints under him is boring.

Saintsfan76: Puel has plenty of experience in Europe and if we had won tonight the fans calling for his head would be singing a different tune. Lessons will have been learnt tonight and the players will be feeling it just as much as the fans. But i am sure we will back. Its easy to forget sometimes how low we have been in recent years after all.

StaffsSaint: I didn't think it could get worse than Saturdays result, oh yes it does. This game, opposition have 1 shot on target, score. Away to Sparta and Inter, same thing as I recall.

The slow build up is causing us grief. We need to get back to 4-2-3-1, move or drop Redmond, and press again. Embarrassing.

kivetonsaint: Absolute



Saints v Hapoel.

rubbish, I'm not one to complain about the manager but something's not right. Why didn't Fonte play - are we preventing him from being cup tied? For the first time in recent history we are going backwards. Why is it that Redmond plays every game.

Nunner: How can you go into a vital home game with the sound of 0-0 ringing in your ears to get through. Think Puel has taken rotation to another level. Now the Europa has gone we will see how good his coaching and management is....or isn't.

In 48 years nothing had changed for me...we can beat anyone on any day but we can't beat anyone when we really need to.

forlorn: Puel must be sacked. His idiotic defensive mentality cost us this match and our previous drawn encounter with the Israelis.

Continued on page 20

'Disgraceful'

from page 19

Under Puel Saints seem to be incapable of launching a credible attack, even against minnows like Sheva who we should have hammered with ease. Instead Saints played a high-risk strategy going for a goalless draw and came royally unstuck when Sheva scored with what was probably their only shot on target. This was a gutless, disgraceful strategy by Puel and demonstrates beyond dispute that he is not the man to be managing a forward-looking club like Saints.

FindAndDestroy: You need to ask yourself who put Puel in charge? who is selling our top players and buying players without even consulting the team manager? We may have a top team manager but if he doesn't have the players who can do the job, we will be going back to square one.... We are not scoring goals, a defender had to step in to score a goal.



Saints v Hapoel Be'er Sheva.

Our problem is MUCH MUCH BIGGER THAN PUEL....

Before we know it, we will soon be a club in crisis...for a self inflicted problem.

Got to be said: It shows clearly when we press hard and not sit back we can persist in our goal scoring effort, but yet again we sit back and get punished. Take note Puel, it's YOU that need to learn.

saintsfan76: "The Sucker Punch". An oft used phrase in football which summed up nicely what happened last night. Its little doubt the team were playing for the draw up until that point. One defensive error, one goal. Awful to be honest but inevitable. A lot of us feared the outcome the longer the game went on. To my mind we need to spend in the transfer window in January.

Cont on facing page

PINK SAINTS

Where it all went

By Simon Carter



SAINTS crashed out of the Europa League this week after only managing a 1-1 home draw with Hapoel Be'er Sheva.

Here, the Sports Pink looks back at their six group matches.

Sparta Prague (H) W 3-0

Charlie Austin scored twice as Saints secured their first win under manager Claude Puel by beating Sparta Prague in the Europa League.

Austin, playing in his first ever European tie, opened the scoring with a controversial penalty after Costa Nhamoinesu was harshly adjudged to have handled while challenging the striker.

Dusan Tadic had to be ushered away after arguing about who should take the penalty but celebrated with Austin.

Austin's header made it 2-0 before sub Jay Rodriguez added a late third.

Saints: Forster, Martina, Yoshida, Van Dijk (c), Targett, Romeu (Davis 83), Ward-Prowse, Hojbjerg, Tadic (Redmond 70), Austin (Rodriguez 76), Long. Subs: McCarthy, Fonte, Bertrand, Clasie.

Hapoel Be'er Sheva (A) D 0-0

Saints earned a point from a dour affair in Israel.

The game improved after a poor first half, James Ward-Prowse forcing a save from long range and Maor Melikson and Ben Sahar each going close for Hapoel.

However, it was not a great spectacle for the 300 Saints fans who made the 3,000-mile journey to the Israeli champions.

The draw left Saints and Hapoel level on four points at the top of Group K.

They were one ahead of Sparta Prague, who inflicted a second defeat on Inter Milan.

Saints: Forster, Martina, Yoshida, Van Dijk, Targett, Romeu, Ward-Prowse, Clasie, Hesketh (Tadic 34), Redmond, Long.

Inter Milan (A) L 0-1

Saints were punished for several missed chances as Inter eased the pressure on manager Frank de Boer by snatching their first Europa League group win.

Inter rarely threatened before Italian international Antonio Candreva lashed a shot into the top corner.

Marcelo Brozovic's late dismissal for two bookings gave Saints renewed hope, with both Virgil van Dijk and Charlie Austin denied from point-blank range.

Saints: Forster, van Dijk, McQueen, Martina,



Above - Charlie Austin and Dusan Tadic argue about who will take a penalty against Sparta.

Right - Sam McQueen's body language says it all as Saints lose in Prague.

Below - Virgil Van Dijk equalises against Inter at St Mary's



Yoshida, Ward-Prowse, Hojbjerg, Rodriguez (Davis, 78), Romeu, Long (Austin, 48), Tadic (Boufal, 73).

Inter Milan (H) W 2-1

Saints remained on course to reach the knockout phase after

fighting back to earn a memorable win against the Italian giants.

Inter, who had sacked boss Frank de Boer just two days earlier, scored with their first shot on target through skipper Mauro Icardi.

Dusan Tadic missed a penalty in first-half injury-time, but Virgil van Dijk hooked in to level as Saints improved after the break.

Claude Puel's men claimed a historic win thanks to Yuto Nagatomo's own-goal howler.



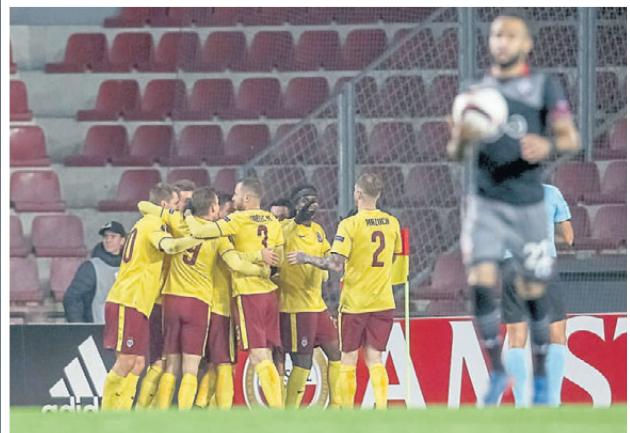
PINK PINK SAINTS

wrong for Claude

Right - Saints concede early at Sparta Prague.

Middle (left): Nathan Redmond all smiles after the home win over Sparta.

Middle (right): Charlie Austin heads home against Sparta at St Mary's.



Saints score their winner against Inter Milan at St Mary's.

The defender, under little pressure, allowed Tadic's left-wing cross to bounce off his thigh and loop over his keeper Samir Handanovic.

Saints: Forster, McQueen, Martina, Yoshida, van Dijk, Redmond, Romeu, Hojbjerg, Ward-Prowse, Tadic (Davis, 77), Rodriguez (Austin,

59 Sparta Prague (A) L 0-1

Saints' Europa League fate went down to the final group game after a miserable display in the

Czech Republic.

Costa Nhamainesu's early close-range volley from a tight angle after Borek Dockal's free-kick sealed a deserved win for the hosts.

Saints, who made seven chang-

es to the side that started the goalless draw with Liverpool, were lacklustre throughout and it required two fine saves from Fraser Forster to deny Dockal.

Skipper Virgil van Dijk headed a great chance to equalise over the bar in the closing stages as Sparta advanced as group winners to the last 32 with one game to spare.

Saints: Forster, van Dijk, McQueen, Martina, Yoshida, Ward-Prowse, Hojbjerg (Boufal, 55), Clasie (Austin, 72), Long, Rodriguez (Romeu, 55), Redmond

Hapoel Be'er Sheva (H) D 1-1

Saints crashed out of the Europa League after a draw with Hapoel Beer Sheva sent the Israeli side into the last 32 at the Saints' expense.

'Detimental effect'

from facing page

malcher: Without knowing what is going on behind the scenes, the treatment of Fonte seems to be a disgrace. He has showed loyalty to the club beyond what could be expected. He played a significant role in getting us back to where we now are and will always be a legend here whatever he chooses to do now. I believe the situation regarding Jose is having a detrimental effect on the club.

M Clarke: To say last night was disappointing is an understatement. We should have won this group at a canter.

I asked in the summer what is the club's ambition. We can't keep managers, or players. Why? We haven't replaced Mane and Pelle and I'm sorry to say this but I'm starting to think that Claude Puel is out of his depth in the Premiership.

I can't understand



Saints vs Hapoel.

his tactics, we are so inconsistent it is unbelievable. I know that we are playing a lot of matches and there is the need to give players an occasional rest but we now need to decide what is our strongest team and play them regularly so that we can get some cohesion again.

We come to be entertained, Claude, not bored. We all know where our weaknesses lie so the Board must use some of that cash from player sales to strengthen the squad in January.

I don't think that we will be in a relegation fight but we must get some momentum going soon. Let's hope for a good win on Sunday to lift our spirits.

Last night was a full, lacklustre and had a certain inevitability about it. Beer Sheva seemed to want it more than us.

Continued on page 22

'Out of his depth'

from page 21

Steve_105: No need for an inquest, it's plainly obvious to us all. Why would you play for a draw at home knowing that just one away goal would knock you out. Puel should have picked an attacking side with two up front from the off to get some quick goals and then defend for the last 20 minutes.

Be'er did the right thing, let us play square ineffective football, and then bring on their big guns to grab a goal. Hats off to them.

We have now seen enough of Puel to now know that he is out of his depth and well short on tactics.

He's not the first manager we have had to be in this position, we have just thankfully forgotten them. But I don't think the Board got this appointment right.

We are in a relegation battle, no mistake.

Tyke15: Well it looks like there will be some empty



Saints vs Hapoel.

seats next season given the comments on here.

I was equally disappointed last night and for the first time ever I did not clap the players off the pitch.

However, new day and a little bit of prospective.

Puel is being very loyal to the Board in not criticising them which anyone in his position would do publicly.

Last season was a one off with Liverpool and Chelsea all under performing whilst ourselves and Leicester both exceeded expectations.

Had Keoman stayed he would have understood the loss of Pelle and Mane but lets be honest we all expected Long to continue to score and JRod to return as a potent striker.

Back to last night - at no time did I get the view that we were playing for a draw, a mistake by Romeu led to the goal and he has been Mr Consistent so hardly Puel's fault.

Continued on facing page

PINK SAINTS

Why the stats

By Simon Carter



THEY are worrying stats, and the fear is they could get even worse.

Even before Charlie Austin suffered his latest shoulder injury against Hapoel Be'er Sheva in Thursday's Europa League exit, Saints' scoring record was cause for concern.

Following last weekend's 3-0 capitulation at struggling Crystal Palace, Saints have only scored 13 goals in 14 Premier League games.

Only promoted pair Burnley (12) and Hull (11) have scored fewer goals so far.

Middlesbrough have also scored 13, which doesn't exactly set pulses racing for an entertainment test at St Mary's this weekend.

If Saints' current 0.92 goals per game average is maintained throughout the club's 38-match league programme, they will end with 35 goals.

That would be 25 fewer goals than they scored in 2015/16.

Of the 59-goal haul last term, Graziano Pelle and Sadio Mane shared 22 of them.

As the stats illustrate all to easily, those goals haven't been replaced.

Austin has been doing his bit, but he has needed support.

And now he isn't around either.

Austin has so far scored his six league goals at a rate of every 145 minutes.

That is a fine record, and better than Pelle or Mane managed last season.

In 2015/16, Pelle scored 11 goals in 2,174 league minutes - a goal every 197 minutes.

Mane struck 11 times in 2,608 minutes - a goal every 237 minutes.

Elsewhere, Shane Long also reached double figures - his 10 goals coming at a rate of one every 211 minutes.

Dusan Tadic weighed in with seven league goals last term - one every 327 minutes.

Compare those stats to the current campaign.

Let's start with Tadic, who only has one goal in 863 minutes.

Nathan Redmond is the second top league marksman with three goals in 1,234 minutes - one every 411 minutes (or four and a half games).

Jay Rodriguez has been restricted to 116 minutes, and has scored once.

That is one more than Long, who has yet to net in 363 minutes of league action.

He last scored for Saints against Manchester City on May 2.

Since then, in league action, he



A worrying sight for Saints as Charlie Austin suffers another shoulder injury against Hapoel.

has gone 601 minutes - just over ten hours - without finding the net.

In addition, the Republic of Ireland striker has played a further 548 minutes - another nine hours plus - of cup football this season without scoring.

Put together, that's 1,149 minutes without a goal in Saints' colours.

That is more than a worry.

Since the start of last season, Rodriguez has played 463 minutes in the league (almost eight hours) and has just the one goal against Sunderland back in August.

Of course, Rodriguez has had well-documented injury problems.

But if he is to ever recapture his glorious form of 2013/14 - when

he was Saints' top league scorer with 15 goals and won a senior England cap - he needs to stay injury free and enjoy a regular run of games.

Sadly, neither of those things have happened.

Long's 2016/17 season has been hindered by injuries, but he has still appeared in ten of Saints' 14 league matches.

PINK PINK SAINTS

are so worrying



Jay Rodriguez, right, has only scored once in the league this season



Nathan Redmond is trying to adapt to a new role under Claude Puel.

No doubt frustratingly for him, most of his appearances have been off the bench.

Last season's Daily Echo Saints player of the year has been restricted to just three league starts under Puel.

With that in mind, no wonder he is struggling to repeat his superb performances of 2015/16. Like Rodriguez, his confidence and fit-

ness could do with regular starts and more minutes.

But like Rodriguez, that hasn't been forthcoming.

With Austin now sidelined, that might - should - change.

Puel hasn't got many options, has he?

From day one, he has tried to convert Redmond from a winger to a striker - in the same way he

converted Thierry Henry.

That is a nice line of thinking, but it's not working.

Redmond is getting increasing criticism from sections of the fanbase, but he is a 22-year-old guy being asked to try and adapt to a new position in a high pressure atmosphere.

Again, it needs time.

Which is what Puel doesn't re-

ally have - not now, anyway, not in the wake of Saints' dismal Europa League exit.

One of the primary reasons the Frenchman was brought in to replace Ronald Koeman was his enthusiasm for the club's academy and giving youngsters more of a chance than he predecessor did.

He has delivered on that, for sure, with the likes of Sam McQueen, Josh Sims, Jake Hesketh, Jack Stephens, Harrison Reed and Lloyd Isgrove all getting starts.

Which is why it's odd that another of the club's youngsters, Sam Gallagher, has been loaned out to Blackburn Rovers.

Odd for two reasons.

1) Gallagher has more first team experience than all the others previously mentioned - having made 18 league appearances under Mauricio Pochettino in 2013/14 (15 as a sub).

2) He is a striker, and Puel doesn't have many of them to choose from.

Gallagher is impressing in the Championship, and has scored seven times in a struggling Blackburn side.

Puel said recently that he had no plans to recall the 21-year-old in January.

Those plans could well have changed now Austin is sidelined.

We don't know how long the top scorer will be out for, but his previous shoulder injuries have seen him sidelined for at least a month.

Saints have had few problems in terms of getting shots in on goal in league games this season.

They are averaging 15.6 efforts on goal per match - the sixth highest number in the top flight.

Of those, an average of 5.2 have been on target - again, the sixth highest in the division (and more than Arsenal or Koeman's Everton, for that matter).

Yet, as previously mentioned, Saints are the joint third bottom scorers in the Premier League.

That tells us the team are creating chances, but need more clinical finishers.

Saints fans crave an entertaining team to watch - which set of football supporters don't? - but again the stats are worrying.

At present, Saints prop up the Premier League's 'entertainment' table with an average of just two goals per game so far.

Though there is no doubt the quality of their defence, they have only scored more than once in a game on two occasions - against West Ham and Burnley.

That is another worrying stat.

It's certainly worrying for the supporters and, one would sincerely hope, for Puel - privately, anyway, even if he would never admit it publicly.

Tipping point

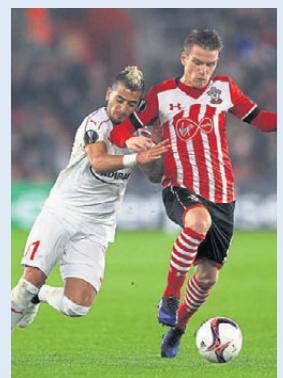
from facing page

Yoshi played well so we did not miss Fonte. I do agree the Fonte situation (is) strange but Puel has always picked Yoshi for the cup matches, so why change?

Kingsland Saint: We are at a tipping point right now. Lots of hard work last year is thrown away by a lack of ambition - the fact we are at the bottom of the table for conversion attempts to goals in the Premier League is shocking and worrying.

It's great that there is a Southampton way of doing things which we should be proud of as Saints fans, but right now I think that most of us down at St Mary's can see the issues.

We have recovered each year from losing players but this year the situation is more acute - Pelle and Mane have left a massive hole that has not been filled and we are exposed - Redmond still has to step up a gear while the treatment of Fonte is clearly having an effect.



Saints v Hapoel.

saintmatt: Very disappointing evening, but no surprise to a lot of fans. We just struggle to score goals. Defensively we are ok, and that should keep us up.

Last season we finished strongly in 6th position. We should have kicked on from there, but the club seems to have other priorities on their mind, and promptly sold our best player to Liverpool for a giveaway 34 mil. Big Andy Carroll cost more than that.

Zurichboy: There is a nasty smell coming out of St.Mary's at the moment and it has nothing to do with the Solent at low tide.

We have seen our team asset stripped over the last couple of seasons and now we are slowly but surely paying the price for it.

We all criticised Pochettino and Koeman for their leaving the way they did, but just maybe they knew something that we are not privileged to.

PINK**SAINTS****EUROPA LEAGUE GROUPS
- HOW THEY STAND****Group A**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	6	4	1	1	8	6	13
Man United	6	4	0	2	12	4	12
Feyenoord	6	2	1	3	3	7	7
Zorya Luh	6	0	2	4	2	8	2

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
APOEL	6	4	0	2	8	6	12
Olympiacos	6	2	2	2	7	6	8
Young Boys	6	2	2	2	7	5	8
Astana	6	1	2	3	5	11	5

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saint-Etienne	6	3	3	0	8	5	12
Anderlecht	6	3	2	1	16	8	11
Mainz 05	6	2	3	1	8	9	9
Gabala	6	0	0	6	5	14	0

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit SP	6	5	0	1	17	8	15
AZ	6	2	2	2	6	10	8
M Tel Aviv	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Dundalk	6	1	1	4	5	8	4

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	6	3	3	0	16	7	12
Astra Giurgiu	6	2	2	2	7	10	8
Viktoria Plze	6	1	3	2	7	10	6
Austria V	6	1	2	3	11	13	5

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ath Bilbao	6	3	1	2	10	11	10
Genk	5	3	0	2	11	9	9
Sassuolo	5	1	2	2	9	9	5
Rapid Vienna	6	1	3	2	7	8	6

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	6	4	2	0	11	6	14
Celta Vigo	6	2	3	1	10	7	9
St Liège	6	1	4	1	8	6	7
Panathinaikos	6	0	1	5	3	12	1

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sh Donetsk	6	6	0	0	21	5	18
Gent	6	2	2	2	9	13	8
Braga	6	1	3	2	9	11	6
Konyaspor	6	0	1	5	2	12	1

Group I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Schalke 04	6	5	0	1	9	3	15
Krasnodar	6	2	1	3	8	8	7
Salzburg	6	2	1	3	6	6	7
Nice	6	2	0	4	5	11	6

Group J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiorentina	6	4	1	1	15	6	13
PAOK	6	3	1	2	7	6	10
Qaraba	6	2	1	3	7	12	7
Slovan Liberec	6	1	1	4	7	12	4

Group K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sp Prague	6	4	0	2	8	6	12
Be'er Sheva	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
SAINTS	6	2	2	2	6	4	8
Inter	6	2	0	4	8	11	6

Group L

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Osmanlispor	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Villarreal	6	2	3	1	9	8	9
Zürich	6	1	3	2	5	7	6
St Bucharest	6	1	3	2	5	7	6

No issues with Fonte, insists boss Puel



Jose Fonte

THERE is "not a problem" with Jose Fonte, according to Saints boss Claude Puel.

Fonte's absence from the Europa League decider with Hapoel Be'er Sheva meant the centre half didn't figure during the club's entire European campaign.

There is continued speculation over whether Fonte will be sold in January with his contract situation showing few signs of getting resolved.

However, Puel maintains that he is making decisions in the best interest of the team, and not be-

cause of any issue surrounding the defender.

"Jose is, OK, a good player but he needs like the other players some games to recover."

"He is 33, he played like a lot of players in my squad international games and in the Premier League and it's important to stay all the squad fit."

"It's not a problem with Fonte."

"He keep the difference for the next game and it's important to stay for every game the idea clear."

"The defence do a good game on Thursday."

"I understand all the people will have a strong disappointment, the fans and all the people in Southampton."

"The disappointment of the investment of all the people in this competition, and we like this competition and we give all for this, but now if we like this competition it's important to come back and to look forward and to stay with a positive attitude and to go play and win our game now and to come back in the first part of the league."

"This is a good road for us."

Dennis dismay at dismal Euro exit

By Simon Walter



FORMER Saints stars Mark Dennis and Jim Steele described the club's Europa League exit as "dreadful" and "embarrassing".

Dennis, who played in the Uefa Cup for Saints during his four-year spell at The Dell in the mid-1980s, was expecting the club to qualify for the last 32, writes SIMON WALTER.

Reflecting on the 1-1 draw against Hapoel Be'er Sheva, he said: "That was absolutely dreadful, the way they went out to get a 0-0 draw was poor."

"I was confident we'd go through so it just shows how much I know about football."

"I'm so disillusioned, Virgil Van Dijk was magnificent but I'm almost certain he'll go next month."

"The second ball was the major problem – we didn't win enough of them. At the end we had two great chances with headers that (Graziano) Pelle would have scored. With Charlie Austin injured we need a new striker badly. "We didn't deserve the win."

"After being 0-0 for so long, you could see their goal coming and it was a great strike."

Dennis believes Saints have missed out on a big opportunity.

"We've let ourselves and the fans down," he said. "There was nervous atmosphere and sometimes that does affect the players, but Jose Fonte had to play."

"Going into the last 16 with the likes of Man Utd and Liverpool would have kept things burning."

We've shown we can beat anyone on our day so who knows how far

we could have gone. Unfortunately we won't find out now."

"But I have to congratulate the club for the last year. I'm doing somersaults, at being halfway up the league and in the league cup semi-finals after the players we sold."

"He changes the team too much, I don't understand why we don't play Fonte every time," said the Scotsman. "It was embarrassing. Not playing Fonte was an unbelievable decision."

Former Saints centre-half Jim

Steele, who played for the club in the 1976-77 European Cup Winners' Cup after his FA Cup final heroics, was frustrated by Claude Puel's tinkering – and the absence of Fonte.

"He changes the team too much. You can't keep changing the team every week and expect to be consistent. It's six changes one week, five the next... players should be fit enough to play three times a week."

"We should never have sold

Pelle and we should have got a replacement. We know Austin has a track record of being injured.

"If we lose on Sunday we're in big trouble."

Daily Echo**FIND THE BALL**

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RESULTS

CLOSING DATE FOR POSTAL ENTRIES
 Thursday 9am,
 15th Dec 2016
 Names of winners will be published on Saturday, 17th Dec or Sunday 18th Dec 2016

An incident in an Eastleigh v Guisley match

Winners

Competition number S48

JACKPOT WINNER NO WINNER

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K Lillicrap Plymouth, Devon

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K Brunsdon	Southampton, Hants	A McDonald	Fair Oak, Hants
D Callaghan	Lymington, Hants	P Nott	Southampton, Hants
G Clarke	Southampton, Hants	S Oldfield	Eastleigh, Hants
R Cummins	Southampton, Hants	M Reid	Southampton, Hants
D Elliott	Southampton, Hants	D Rogers	Southampton, Hants
K Feher	Southampton, Hants	P Street	Southampton, Hants
D Forder	Southampton, Hants	V Sutton	Southampton, Hants
C Freeman	Southampton, Hants	R Williams	Southampton, Hants

Rules

1. You are allowed a minimum of 60 crosses and a maximum of 450 per coupon. Coupons with 451 or more will be disqualified. Entries altered, defaced or mutilated will be invalid. Crosses must be distinct and separate. 2. Competitors may submit as many coupons as they wish. Members of a family can send their entries in one envelope with a covering postal order or cheque. 3. No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, lost or mislaid. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. 4. Payment may be made by postal order or cheque for the correct amount payable to Newsquest, and crossed 'n' Co. Stamps will not be accepted in payment. 5. A competitor cannot win more than one share of the prize money across all titles each week. 6. The Editor's decision on winning entry or entries and matters relating to this competition is binding in honour only. NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERED INTO. 7. Employees of NEWSQUEST Media Group and subsidiary companies and members of their families are not eligible to enter the competition. 8. Address entries to FTB, Newspaper House, Test Lane, Southampton, SO16 9JX in a sealed envelope. Understamped entries are not accepted. 9. Prize monies are held for and on behalf of winners. 10. Do not send cash in the post. 11. Winners will be required to participate in publicity. 12. Photocopies not accepted. 13. For rules go to www.dailyecho.co.uk/promotions/rules. 14. If you pay by cheque your prize money will be paid to you once cheque has cleared.



Please use black/blue ink and capitals

10th December, 2016

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Daily Echo

FIND THE BALL is a test of skill and football knowledge and is open to readers of the Southampton, Bournemouth, Dorset Echoes, Brighton Argus and Sunday Independent, Plymouth.

You have to use your skill and judgement to determine the exact centre of the ball.

Mark an X with a ballpoint pen on the picture where you consider that position to be—clear rubber stamps and self adhesive labels will also be accepted.

Every coupon will be carefully examined and the jackpot prize will be paid to the entrant whose cross marks the exact centre of the ball when the photograph was taken.

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If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.

Debut tons

Keaton Jennings became just the 19th England batsman to score a century on Test debut after reaching three figures in his first innings against India in Mumbai.

Here the Sports Pink looks at the other players who have achieved the feat for England.

WG Grace (1880)

152 in first innings at The Oval as England beat Australia by five wickets.

Kumar Ranjitsinhji (1896)

154 not out in second innings at Old Trafford as England lost to Australia by three wickets.

Sir Pelham Warner (1899)

132 not out in second innings as England beat South Africa by 32 runs in Johannesburg.

Tip Foster (1903)

287 in first innings as England beat Australia by



Keaton Jennings.

five wickets in Sydney.

George Gunn (1907)

119 in first innings as England lost to Australia by two wickets in Sydney.

Nawab of Pataudi (1932)

102 in first innings as England beat Australia by 10 wickets in Sydney.

Bryan Valentine (1933)

136 in first innings as England beat India by nine wickets in Bombay.

Paul Gibb (1938)

106 in second innings as England drew with South Africa in Johannesburg.

Billy Griffith (1948)

140 in first innings at Port of Spain, Trinidad, as England drew with West Indies.

Continued on facing page

PINK SAINTS NOSTALGIA

'I've only gone

By Simon Carter



He's making his list, he's checking it twice... He's going to find out who's naughty or nice ... and, to do that, Santa Claus is reading Saints and Sinners!

This excellent new book by former Echo journalist Graham Hiley takes a hard-hitting, heart-warming and often hilarious look at some of the toughest players to have played for Southampton.

It includes detailed interviews with the likes of Alan Shearer, Jimmy Case, Terry Hurlock, Francis Benali, Rickie Lambert, Graeme Souness, Bruce Grobbelaar and many more.

All speak with brutal openness about their antics both on and off the field, telling anecdotes of terrible tackles and drunken escapades with humour and honesty.

And, in an exclusive competition, we have THREE copies to win – signed by Lambert, Benali, Case, Denis Hollywood, David Prutton, Iain Dowie and Gordon Watson, plus Matthew Le Tissier and Lawrie McMenemy, who both contributed forewords.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these special collectors' items, all you have to do is email echosport@dailyecho.co.uk and tell us which former Saints hard man recently completed an epic challenge running and cycling to every Premier League and Championship ground.

If you don't win, a fourth copy will be auctioned next year in aid of Benali's Big Race to raise money for Cancer Research UK.

And unsigned copies are available from the Saints Shop, Amazon, Waterstones... and Santa.

• Saints and Sinners by Graham Hiley is published by Pitch RRP £16.99.

Mixed memories

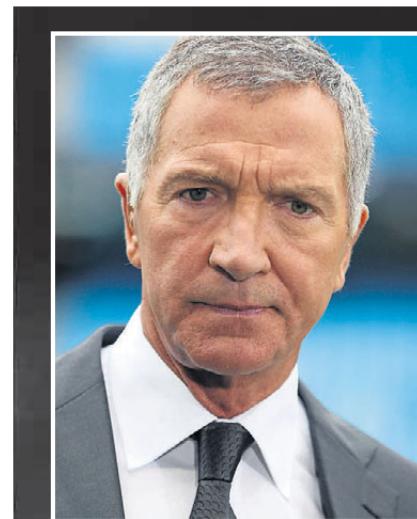
Saints' meeting with Middlesbrough this week will bring back mixed memories for one former Southampton signing.

Perry Groves saw his career ended in a 2-1 defeat at Boro's old Ayresome Park ground just five months after the winger had joined from Arsenal for £750,000.

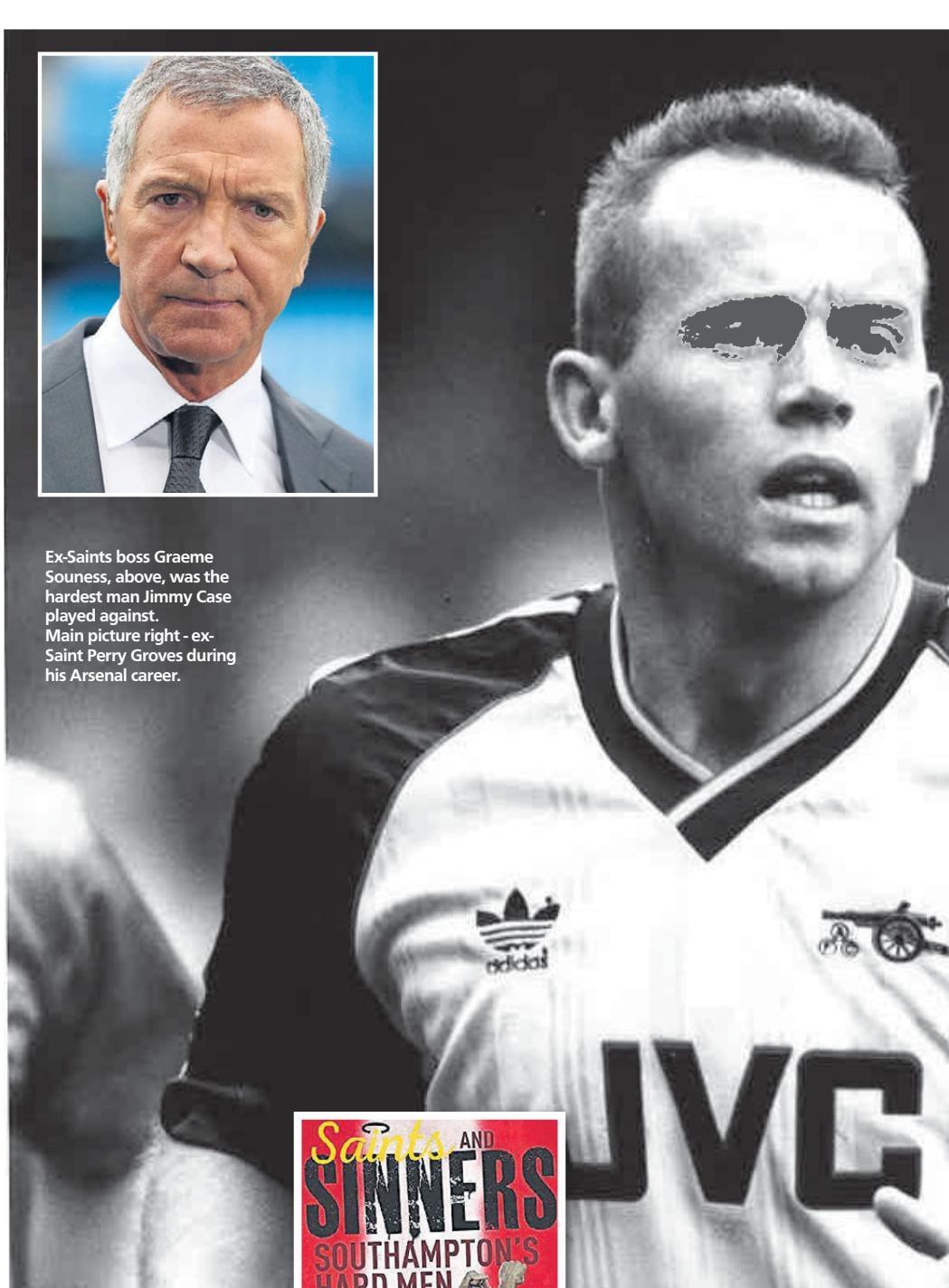
He was carried off after just 15 minutes but his abiding memory is not just of the pain but of being swiftly joined in the dressing room by his close pal Terry Hurlock.

He recalled: "I came off very early in the game. I thought someone had kicked me on the calf but it turned out I had snapped my Achilles tendon.

"I was sitting in the bath feeling



Ex-Saints boss Graeme Souness, above, was the hardest man Jimmy Case played against.
Main picture right - ex-Saint Perry Groves during his Arsenal career.



very depressed although I still didn't know quite how bad the injury was. It was a midweek game and it wasn't diagnosed until the following Monday so I had a floppy foot for six days!
"Anyway, after about 10 minutes I heard the clatter of studs on the tiles. The door was booted open then in came this mane of hair – it was Tel. He said: 'Bloodnut – that

was his nickname for me because of my ginger hair – Bloodnut, I've only gone and done him. That Willie Falconer, he had to have it so he got it and here I am!" Both of them had been sent off and there was only about 20 minutes gone."

However, Groves is more than happy to confirm the widely-held view that Hurlock was not simply a hard man but also a very differ-

PINK SAINTS NOSTALGIA

and done him!

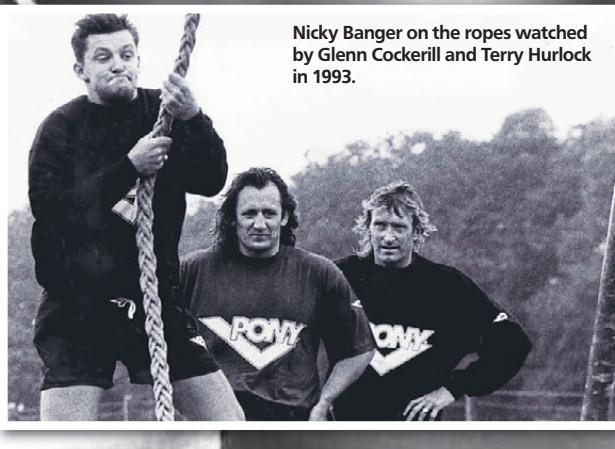
Terry Hurlock arrives at The Dell in 1991. Right - Jimmy Case with Glenn Cockerill.



Terry Hurlock with Alan Shearer



Nicky Banger on the ropes watched by Glenn Cockerill and Terry Hurlock in 1993.



ent character off the field – and a very good footballer.

"The thing about Tel is he was a far better player than most people recognised. They wouldn't see past the hair and the physical attributes but he could actually play."

"His passing was excellent and in the modern game, he would be the perfect holding midfielder. A

lot of players just pass it sideways to keep possession but Tel loved to play the ball with the outside of his right foot and ping it forward.

"It was very easy for people to label him as just a hard man and to dismiss him as someone who just kicked people. And he was certainly brave – if there was a tackle that was 30-70 against him, he would turn it in his favour.

"I don't know if his Seventies Rock hair and image went against him; it definitely didn't earn him the benefit of the doubt from referees. But he could certainly play."

Groves is not the only former Saint with strong memories of Middlesbrough – that was where Jimmy first encountered a young Graeme Souness.

Both feature in *Saints and Sinners*, the new book by former Southern Daily Echo sports reporter Graham Hiley who has interviewed many of the toughest characters ever to pull on the red and white stripes.

Virtually every interviewee named Case as the hardest man they faced or played alongside – so who was the most formidable opponent that Case himself came up against?

"Graeme Souness was the toughest player I ever encountered. It depends how you define 'hard' but as well as strength and steel, he also had a presence.

"It is that presence which gives you a reputation and which intimidates opponents. He certainly had that. He could give a glowering stare which frightened the life out of a lot of players and that was half the battle won."

"I first came across him when he was a youngster playing for Middlesbrough. I had no idea who he was but I remember him going to knock the ball up the line. I stepped between him and the ball and made myself strong."

"I didn't elbow him, I just flicked him and popped him on the nose. He threw me to the floor. There was a great picture in the paper the next day of me on the ground. He had a hand around my throat and was just about to punch me."

"I looked up at him and said 'Go on... and you're off!' But there weren't many who would do that to me so I knew then he had a bit about him."

● These anecdotes and many more feature in *Saints and Sinners*, published by Pitch (RRP £16.99) and the perfect Christmas present not just for any Southampton fan but for anyone who yearns for the days when players thought nothing of tackling chest-high before enjoying a lively night out.

England debut tons

from facing page

Peter May (1951)

138 in first innings at Headingley as England drew with South Africa.

Arthur Milton (1958)

104 not out in first innings at Headingley as England beat New Zealand by an innings and 71 runs. He was the first Gloucestershire player to score a century on his Test debut since WG Grace.

John Hampshire (1969)

107 in first innings at Lord's as England drew with the West Indies.

Frank Hayes (1973)

106 not out in second innings for the Lancashire batsman at The Oval as England lost by 158 runs to West Indies.

Graham Thorpe (1993)



114 not out in second innings for the Surrey batsman at Trent Bridge as England drew with Australia.

Andrew Strauss (2004)

112 in first innings for the future Ashes winning Test skipper as England beat New Zealand by seven wickets at Lord's. Went on to make 20 further Test centuries.

Alastair Cook (2006)

104 not out in second innings for the current Test captain as England drew with India in Nagpur.

Matt Prior (2007)

126 not out in first innings at Lord's for the Sussex wicket-keeper as England drew against the West Indies.

Jonathan Trott (2009)

119 in second innings as England beat Australia by 197 runs at The Oval. Scored eight more Test hundreds.

SAINTS FIXTURES 2016/17



PINK

NON LEAGUE FOOTBALL

EASTLEIGH	GOSPORT BOROUGH	POOLE TOWN	AFC TOTTENHAM	SALISBURY	WINCHESTER						
NATIONAL LEAGUE	NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH	NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH	SOUTHERN LEAGUE Division 1 South & West	SOUTHERN LEAGUE Division 1 South & West	SOUTHERN LEAGUE Division 1 South & West						
August	August	August	August	August	August						
6 Guiseley (H) 9 Braintree (A) 13 Tranmere (A) 16 Dover (H) 20 Wrexham (A) 27 Solihull Moors (H) 29 Bromley (A)	W 2-1 D 1-1 L 1-2 L 2-4 D 0-0 W 2-0 W 5-0	6 Maidenhead United (a) 9 Truro City (h) 13 Eastbourne Borough (H) 16 Dartford (A) 20 East Thurrock United (A) 27 Bishop's Stortford (H) 29 Oxford City (A)	L 0-3 W 3-1 W 3-1 D 0-0 L 1-5 L 0-1 W 2-1	6 Ebbsfleet United (A) 9 Maidenhead United (H) 13 Bishop's Stortford (H) 16 Weston-Super-Mare (A) 20 Margate (H) 27 Hemel Hempstead Town (A) 29 Bath City (H)	L 0-4 W 1-0 W 1-0 D 0-0 W 1-0 W 4-2 W 1-0	6 Hereford (H) 9 Swindon Supermarine (A) 13 North Leigh (A) 16 Larkhall Athletic (H) 27 Bishops Cleeve (A) 29 Salisbury (H)	L 1-2 L 0-1 W 3-2 L 1-6 L 2-3 L 0-4	6 Evesham Utd (H) 10 Winchester City (A) 13 Taunton Town (A) 16 Bishops Cleeve (H) 27 Mangotsfield United (H) 29 AFC Totton (A)	W 1-0 L 2-4 L 1-3 W 4-1 W 2-1 W 4-0	6 Slimbridge (A) 10 Salisbury (H) 13 Mangotsfield United (H) 16 Didcot Town (A) 27 Tiverton Town (H) 29 Wimborne Town (A)	L 3-5 W 4-2 L 0-2 L 0-4 L 0-4 D 2-2
September	September	September	September	September	September						
3 North Ferriby (H) 10 Southport (H) 13 Forest Green (A) 17 Macclesfield (A) 24 Sutton (H)	W 2-0 D 1-1 D 1-1 W 1-0 W 2-1	3 Ebbsfleet United (H) 6 Hampton & RB (H) 10 Hungerford Town (A) 13 Bath City (A) 24 Margate (H)	W 1-0 D 1-1 D 3-3 0-4 W 1-0	3 Weldstone (A) 6 St Albans City (A) 10 Eastbourne Borough (H) 13 Truro City (A) 24 Welling United (H)	D 2-2 L 0-4 D 1-1 D 0-0 W 2-1	10 Evesham United (A) 24 Shortwood United (A) 27 Wimborne Town (H)	D 0-0 L 1-2 L 1-6	10 Bideford (H) 24 Yate Town (A) 27 Didcot Town (H)	D 4-4 L 1-3 W 3-2	10 Hereford (H) 24 Bridgwater Town (H) 27 Wantage Town (A)	L 0-2 W 4-1 W 1-0
October	October	October	October	October	October						
1 Woking (A) 4 Maidstone (H) 8 Dagenham & Red (H) 22 Lincoln (A) 25 Torquay (H) 29 Barrow (A)	D 3-3 W 3-0 L 0-1 D 0-0 W 3-0 L 0-4	8 St. Albans City (A) 15 Chelmsford City (H) 22 Wealdstone (H) 29 Hemel Hempstead Tn (A)	L 1-2 L 0-6 L 1-3 W 2-1	8 Hampton & Richmond (A) 15 Oxford City (H) 22 Hungerford Town (A) 29 East Thurrock United (H)	W 2-0 L 1-3 W 1-0 D 1-1	15 Tiverton Town (A) 22 Slimbridge (H) 25 Didcot Town (A)	L 1-1 L 2-3 L 2-3	15 Slimbridge (A) 18 North Leigh (A) 22 Barnstaple Town (H)	L 1-2 L 2-3 W 5-0	15 Didcot (H) 18 Shortwood (A) 22 Taunton Town (A)	W 3-1 L 1-2 L 1-3
November	November	November	November	November	November						
12 York (H) 19 Gateshead (A) 22 Aldershot (A) 26 Chester (H) 29 Maidstone (A)	D 1-1 D 2-2 W 1-0 L 0-3 L 1-2	12 Weston-super-Mare (A) 19 Concord Rangers (H)	D 1-1 L 2-5	5 Welling United (H) 12 Chelmsford City (H) 12 Concord Rangers (A) 19 Whitehawk (H)	W 4-0 L 2-3 W 3-1	12 Mangotsfield United (A) 19 North Leigh (H) 23 Larkhall Athletic (A) 26 Hereford (A)	L 0-3 L 0-3 D 0-0 L 0-5	12 Tiverton Town (H) 19 Taunton Town (H) 29 Winchester City (H)	L 1-2 W 5-2 PP	12 Tiverton Town (H) 16 North Leigh (H) 29 Salisbury (A)	W 2-0 L 1-2 PP
December	December	December	December	December	December						
17 Southport 26 Boreham Wood	(A) (H)	1 Poole Town 7 Hungerford Town	January	January	January						
January		14 East Thurrock United		January	January						
1 Boreham Wood 7 Macclesfield 21 Sutton 28 Woking	(A) (H)	21 Hampton & RB 28 Maidenhead United		2 Winchester City 7 Taunton Town 14 Margate 14 Wantage Town	(H)	2 Wimborne Town 7 North Leigh 7 North Leigh 14 Wantage Town	(A)	2 Wimborne Town 7 Shortwood Utd 7 Shortwood Utd	(A)	2 Wimborne Town 14 Larkhall Athletic 21 Bideford	(A)
February		4 Truro City 11 Dartford	February	February	February						
4 Braintree 11 Guiseley 18 Tranmere 25 Dover 28 Aldershot	(H)	18 Eastbourne Borough 25 Hemel Hempstead Town	4 Maidenhead United 11 Weston-Super-Mare 18 Bishop's Stortford 25 East Thurrock United	(A)	4 Wimborne Town 4 Wimborne Town 11 Tiverton Town 18 Yate Town 25 Didcot Town	(A)	4 Didcot Town 11 Slimbridge 11 Slimbridge 18 Swindon Supermarine 25 Paulton Rovers	(A)	4 Wimborne Town 11 North Leigh 18 Evesham Utd 25 Bishops Cleeve	(A)	
March		18 St. Albans City	March	March	March						
4 York 11 Barrow 18 Chester 21 Torquay 25 Gateshead	(A) (H)	21 Bath City 25 Chelmsford City	4 Hungerford Town 11 Welling United 18 Hampton & Richmond 17 Bath City 1 Concordan Rangers	(H)	4 Slimbridge 11 Bridgwater Town 11 Bridgwater Town 18 Tiverton Town 18 Winchester City	(A)	4 Barnstaple Town 11 Larkhall Athletic 11 Larkhall Athletic 18 Yate Town 18 Winchester City	(A)	4 Taunton Town 11 Swindon Supermarine 11 Swindon Supermarine	(H)	
April		8 Welling United	April	April	April						
1 Dagenham & Red 8 Lincoln 14 North Ferriby 17 Bromley 22 Solihull Moors 29 Wrexham TBA: Forest Green	(A) (H)	14 Bishop's Stortford 17 Oxford City 22 Concord Rangers 29 Whitehawk	8 Chelmsford City 15 Hemel Hempstead Town 17 Bath City 22 Whitehawk 29 Dartford	(A)	1 Bideford 8 Barnstaple Town 15 Bishops Cleeve 17 Winchester City 22 Evesham	(H)	1 Shortwood Utd 8 Wantage Town 15 Mangotsfield Utd 17 Wimborne Town 22 Bideford	(A)	8 Larkhall Athletic 15 Tiverton Town 17 AFC Totton 17 AFC Totton 22 Hereford	(H)	

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PINK

Kings of the comeback

SIR Bradley Wiggins had been expected to retire after November's Ghent Six Day event but instead has confounded these suggestions by being retained on British Cycling's 2016-17 podium programme.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at three major stars who were unable to remain retired.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER

CURRENTLY on his third retirement, boxer Mayweather is arguably the master of this genre. Each of his three comebacks have generated huge media and public interest and he may not be the superstar he is today without them.

Having originally retired



Sir Bradley Wiggins

in 2006, the boxer returned in 2007 but retired again in 2008. He returned once more in 2009 when he would resist a third retirement until 2015.

MICHAEL PHELPS

THE American swimmer announced his first retirement at the 2012 Olympics, saying: "I'm done. I'm finished. I'm retired. I'm done."

But he returned to increase his medal tally in the 2016 Olympics. At 31 years old he won five golds and a silver in Rio, ending his career with a total of 23 Olympic medals.

MICHAEL JORDAN

JORDAN'S first retirement in 1993 was to pursue a career in baseball.

He returned to basketball with the Bulls in 1995 and went on to win three more championships in 1996, 1997, and 1998 before retiring once more in 1999.

Burridge are going in the right direction....

BURRIDGE AFC climbed off the bottom of the City of Southampton Sunday League's Junior 5 table with a 1-1 draw against Sporting Compass.

The respective goals were scored by Scott Williams and Sam Driscoll.

Che stars

Junior Six leaders Testlands Reserves beat

third-placed Chamberlayne Athletic A 5-2 thanks to a man-of-the-match performance from 16 year-old Che Agrella, who scored twice. He was said to be "head and shoulders above the rest of his team", which included dad Jon, 42, and brother Asa, 18.

Dean Laxton and Luca Cordeddu also scored for Testlands. Ben Finn and Jack Sharpe scored in each half for Chamberlayne.

But AFC Forestside remain six points be-

hind with two games in hand after a Sam Vidler hat-trick ensured a 6-3 win against Park Gate Panthers.

Still bottom

Josh Metcalfe scored twice and Mark Lavelle also scored.

Itchen Reserves are still bottom after a 4-2 defeat against fellow strugglers Abbotswood.

Hants land Ashes winner Edwards

Simon Walter



TWENTY-two years after becoming England's youngest cricketer, Charlotte Edwards CBE looks set to end her career with Hampshire.

It was in 1995 that a 16-year-old Edwards made her England bow, since when she has represented her country more than 300 times across the three formats.

The 36-year-old is the first player to score more than 2,500 runs in T20 internationals and she captained England to three Ashes successes as well as the World T20/World Cup double in 2009.

In 2014 she became the second woman to be honoured as one of Wisden's Cricketers of the Year, but her international career ended in June.

She was controversially axed as England captain, coach Mark Robinson believing it was in the best interests of the team.

Edwards' 191st one-day international, against South Africa in February, turned out to be her last England appearance.

But she then enjoyed a remarkable first season as captain of the Southern Vipers, leading the Ageas Bowl-based team to this year's inaugural Kia Super League title.

She will now be at The Ageas Bowl even more often after signing for Hampshire following 16 seasons at Kent.

Edwards will feature for Hampshire Women as well as continuing to skipper the Southern Vipers.

Hampshire finished third in division two of the women's One-day Cup and was sixth in division two of the T20 Cup last season.

With Edwards in the side, their aspirations will be higher.

Bob Parks, Hampshire Women



Charlotte Edwards has signed for Hampshire following 16 seasons at Kent.

head of performance and Southern Vipers manager, said: "We're delighted to welcome Charlotte to Hampshire ahead of the 2017 season. She has been exceptional during her time at the Ageas Bowl so far as part of the Southern Vipers and the immense value, experience and knowledge she adds will be key in driving the im-

provement of women's and girls' cricket in Hampshire and across the Southern Vipers region.

"I'm delighted to have signed for Hampshire Cricket," she said. "After spending the last year at the Ageas Bowl with the Southern Vipers it felt the right move for me to play my last few years of cricket with the club.

"The opportunity has come at a great time in my career and I look forward to playing with such a young and exciting group over the next few seasons."

The right-hander scored more than 10,000 international runs during her 21-year career with England. She was awarded a CBE for her services to cricket in 2014.

PINK

Thumping victory lifts CDA off bottom spot

CDA won their first City of Southampton Sunday League Senior Division match of the season to climb off the bottom of the table.

They ended a run of six successive defeats by beating Yacht Tavern 5-1 thanks to a brace from the *Daily Echo's* Martin Wolf and goals from Southampton FC photographer Matt Watson, Sam Barton and Sam Knapp.

Missed chance

Martyn Poore scored for Yacht Tavern, who have now replaced CDA at the foot of the table.

RS Normansland missed the chance to replace Boyatt Wood at the top after coming from behind to draw 2-2 against Cricketers

Arms (Fair Oak). They trailed 1-0 at half-time but second-half goals from Akbar Shah and John Longman at least ensured a point. Si Eastwood and Adam Moore scored the goals for the Cricketers Arms.

Decisive

Junior One leaders AFC Soton were made to work hard for a 1-0 win against second-from-bottom AFC Bishopstoke, with the decisive goal scored by Lee Farrant-Poole in the first half.

King George climbed above fellow mid-table side AFC Southbrook with a 3-1 win, scoring all their goals in the first half through Josh Daley (two) and Ryan Collins.

With Junior Two leaders Curbridge in cup action, Fawley RBL closed the gap at the top to three points.

They hammered second-from-bottom Test Valley Spartans 12-3. Spartans now have a minus 22 goal difference.

Four goals

Spartans were only 3-2 down at half-time but Jake Voller finished with four goals and there were two apiece for Sean Auger, Daniel Fry and James Willis, as well as goals for Damien Craven and Tom Dolan.

Second-half goals from Nathan Role and Harry Searle gave Fryern a 2-1 win at AFC Portswood (Brandon Perry).

Awesome foursome

Portswood United lost ground at the top of the City of Southampton Sunday League Junior Three after being thrashed 8-3 by Bridge Manor, for whom Ben Baker-Colbourne scored four.

Third-placed Manor closed the gap to a single point and improved their goal difference with six second-half goals.

Matty Camfield scored twice and Shah Bani-Sadr and Alex Thistle also netted.

Romsey Comrades ensured they did not go bottom of Junior Three by coming from behind to deny Forest Home a first win of the season.

Comrades trailed 2-1 at half-time but two goals from Nick White ensured a draw after a first-half goal from Jamie Butler.

Portside won 3-1 against Royal Marine thanks to Daniel Runnalls' brace and a Sam Williams goal. Ben Hooke scored for Marine.

Bedford Arms climbed above Whitehart United in Junior Four by beating their mid-table rivals 6-1.

Matt Hindle scored twice and there were also goals for Kieran Britland, Kieran Jones, Ollie Winters and John Hancock as Bedford continued to climb the table.

Ryan Nobes had kept Whiteheart in the game in the first half.

● In the Hampshire FA Junior C Cup, Hamwic Rovers beat Southern Sports 3-2 thanks largely to a brace from Pawel Burdz.

Craig Harper and Karl Davis scored in the second half for Southern Sports. AFC Itchen lost 2-0 to Nemesis.

Athletico Romsey Sunday won 5-0 at Riverside Rangers after a four-goal salvo from Jamie Bench-Parker and a Tom Probert strike.

OTs & Romsey beat Borough Town 2-0 thanks to a Alex Bampton goal.

● Testwood Tornadoes returned to the top of Junior Five with a 4-2 win against AFC Mayflower.

Lee Wilkinson scored twice in the second half after Jason Calcutt and Mark Chevis put Tornadoes 2-0 up at half-time.

Callum Wookey scored Mayflower's consolation.

Crickets AFC are bottom of Junior Five after Banister Park came from 2-1 down to win 4-3, courtesy of a William Cox hat-trick.

Ollie Burroughs put Cricks 2-1 up at half-time but the strugglers were denied their second win of the season - to go with their 3-1 victory over the same side in September - thanks to Cox's treble and a Gavin Dewey goal.

By Simon Walter



CHAMBERLAYNE Athletic are through to the fourth round of the Hampshire FA Senior Sunday Cup after goals from Matty Hall, Lois Lemessier and Ben Boyce ensured a 3-0 win against FC Bas-

ing. Crusaders are through after beating Mayfair United 4-1 on penalties following a 4-4 draw in which Warren Attrill, two-goal Ryan McDermott and Andy Powell all scored.

Testlands lost on penalties to Baffins Milton Rovers Sunday and AFC Portchester were beaten 2-0 by KRL.

In the third round of the Hampshire FA Junior A Cup Hunters Inn beat UWS 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw, having taken the lead through Ollie Broomfield.

Durley beat Monks 3-1 thanks to goals from Ash Dallimore, Martin Williams and Andy Calvert.

Lyndhurst JFC's Jack Stickland scored twice in a 5-2 win against Curbridge and there were also goals for Lee and Craig Stickland and Adam Brett.

In the Hampshire FA Junior B Cup third round, Barway beat Horndean Hawks thanks to an Emlyn Jones brace and goals from Ben Moody and Liam Buckley.

Mottisfont's Matt Bosanquet bagged five goals in a 7-1 demolition for Kings Worthy, with the other goals scored by Callum Caldwell and Mike MacLeod.

Sholing Monks overcame AFC Whiteley reserves 5-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw, having taken the lead through James Newman,



Burnley's Jeff Hendrick (left) and Cherries' Charlie Daniels in Bournemouth's 3-2 loss – match report on pages 6-7

who also scored in the shoot out.

Winsor United beat Alton Sunday 3-1 with Alex Clark, Ryan Hartley and Brett Withey scoring the goals.

AFC Spitfire came back from 2-0 down only to go out on penalties at Overton.

They trailed 2-0 at half-time before a Neil Philpott goal and

an own goal took the game to shootout. Philpotts also scored in the shootout – along with Reece Badger, Sam Drummond and Lee Anthony – but Overton won it 5-4.



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PINK

Eddie's heroes - how they rated

ENGLAND produced a clean sweep of victories in the autumn with defeats of South Africa, Fiji, Argentina and Australia.

Here the Sports Pink rates the players used by Eddie Jones.

MIKE BROWN

Too charged up against Australia but an otherwise solid autumn from the ever-reliable Southampton-born Harlequins full-back. 7

ALEX GOODE

Strong showing against Fiji in his only appearance of the autumn, but remains on the fringes as Jones is unconvinced. 7

MARLAND YARDE

Heaped with praise by Jones, but misses tackles and rarely breaks them. 6

SEMESA ROKODUGUNI

Marked his second cap with an exciting display against Fiji, but there are flaws in his game that Jones wants rectified. 6

JONNY MAY

Two tries in three appearances headlined a strong return to the international fold after a long-term absence through injury. 7

ELLIOT DALY

Played centre and wing and was superb until his hare-brained red card against Argentina. 6

OWEN FARRELL

Failed to scale the heights evident against Australia in the summer as he continues his recovery from a back injury. 7

JONATHAN JOSEPH

An outstanding autumn from an increasingly rounded player who is now far more than a lethal finisher with an eye for a gap. 8

GEORGE FORD

Consistency is a minor issue, but England's fly-half is an otherwise fantastic player as demonstrated by his masterclass against Argentina. 8

BEN YOUNGS

A battle royal with Conor Murray for the Lions nine jersey awaits after excelling across all four Tests, his dummies providing the highlights. 9

MAKO VUNIPOLA

Started the series stronger than



Hampshire rugby star Mike Brown celebrates after England's win against Australia at Twickenham.

he finished it, but a world-class loosehead with the skills of a centre. 8

DYLAN HARTLEY

Not England's best hooker and fitness is an issue, but his leadership makes him indispensable. 7

DAN COLE

Found himself in Australia's cross-hairs after his scrummaging technique was questioned, but responded well. As solid as ever. 8

COURTNEY LAWES

England's remarkable depth at lock is personified by Lawes, who is not part of the first-choice pairing despite his heroics this autumn. 9

GEORGE KRUIS

Made a seamless return for the second half of the series after making a rapid comeback from

ankle surgery. 8

JOE LAUNCHBURY

A pair of titanic displays were marred by the ban received for kicking a Fijian opponent in the head. 8

CHRIS ROBshaw

Produced another defensive masterclass in the rearguard action against Argentina. His work rate is remarkable. 9

TOM WOOD

Jones turned to the Northampton flanker as a stop-gap measure, but his sterling efforts may force the head coach to revise his thinking. 8

TEIMANA HARRISON

Encouraging signs that he could become an established international, but still lacking in power. 6

BILLY VUNIPOLA

The jewel in England's crown under Jones, Vunipola was magnificent until a knee injury ended his campaign early. 9

NATHAN HUGHES

Had the biggest shoes in the squad to fill in replacing Vunipola, but grew in stature against Australia. 7

Replacements

JAMIE GEORGE: Pushing Hartley very hard at hooker. 7

JOE MARLER: Better defensively and at the set-piece than Mako Vunipola. 7

KYLE SINCKLER: An autumn bursting with promise. 7

DAVE ATTWOOD: A peripheral figure in the series. 6

CHARLIE EWELS: Has added to England's depth at lock. 6

DANNY CARE: Now clearly trailing in Youngs' slipstream. 5

BEN TE'O: Provides power, but still an unknown quantity. 6

HENRY SLADE: A bit-part player who is struggling to make an impression. 5

● Eddie Jones' England completed a clean sweep of victories this autumn.

Here the Sports Pink examines five talking points from the series.

ENGLAND LEAD THE CHARGE

For once it is the southern hemisphere that faces the period of soul searching normally reserved for the European nations upon completion of the autumn. New Zealand were toppled by Ireland before Australia fell to Joe Schmidt's men and England. Of gravest concern are South Africa after they limped through their tour and it is a worrying time for a proud rugby nation. England provide the greatest challenge to the All Blacks' hegemony, yet the rivals will not meet for another two years

WORLD CLASS BILLY

Having outlined his desire to bring through four to five world-class players, Jones has been reluctant to ordain any member of his squad into that exclusive group. But Billy Vunipola is surely worthy of such status. Only Kieran Read could keep him out of a world XV and on current form Saracens' rampaging number eight demands selection ahead of the All Black.

GENUINE DEPTH

Given Vunipola's influence, the knee injury he sustained against Argentina which could see him miss the entire RBS 6 Nations was a bitter blow to player and country, but the aplomb with which Nathan Hughes filled his boots underlines the depth of English rugby. Jones has quality options in most positions, with scrum-half the least well stocked and the second row overflowing with high-calibre alternatives

SETTLED MIDFIELD

For so long England's problem area, Jones has found a midfield combination that is working and could remain intact until the next World Cup, injury permitting. Each of George Ford, Owen Farrell and Jonathan Joseph must start and, although Manu Tuilagi's return from his long-standing injury problems will provide another option at 12, it is hard to see how the Leicester wrecking ball can be accommodated.

EDDIE'S THE MAN

Any doubt that Jones was the right man to guide England into the next World Cup vanished long ago, but a perfect year consisting of 13 victories confirms that he has been an inspired appointment. One of the game's sharpest minds has arrived at Twickenham at the peak of his powers, and England are flourishing as a result.

Cricketing red cards

A red-card penalty is set to be introduced into the Laws of Cricket for the first time.

The MCC, custodian of the laws, will receive a recommendation from its world cricket committee (WCC) to give umpires the power to send off a player in the most extreme cases of on-field breaches of discipline.

Here, the Sports Pink has a look a some of the most asked questions surrounding this proposal.

What is being proposed?

It has been recommended that umpires should be given the power to eject cricketers from a game for serious disciplinary breaches, such as threatening an umpire or acts of violence on the field of play.

Where has this recommendation come from?

The proposal was made by the MCC world cricket committee, an independent body comprising current and former international cricketers and umpires.

Former England captain Mike Brearley is the chairman.

Why does cricket need red cards?

Cricket is one of the few sports which does not currently have in-game punishment for poor behaviour with players retrospectively fined or suspended after the match for rule breaches.

The WCC felt the game needed a mechanism to deal with the worst disciplinary offences during the game. Sanctions such as run penalties and sin bins were ruled out because it was felt that applying them consistently would be too difficult.

What will constitute a red card?

Red cards will only be issued for serious offences, with threatening an umpire, physically assaulting another player, umpire, official or spectator and any other act of violence on the field of play leading to dismissals. Once sent off, a player will be removed from the remainder of the game whether it is a Test or a Twenty20 match.

When will this change take place?

Subject to approval by the main MCC committee, the law will be introduced on October 1 2017. *Cont on facing page*

PINK LOCAL CRICKET

Hampshire league

County 1

Champions: Alton
Top batsman: Steve Berryman (St Cross Symondians), 684 runs.
Top bowler: Aaron Dean (Purbeck), 37 wickets.

County 2

Champions: Longparish
Top batsman: Will de Cani (Longparish), 589 runs.
Top bowler: Alex Gardner (Bedhampton) and James Palmer (Bournemouth II), 27 wickets.

County 3 South

Champions: Parley
Top batsman: Alex Hall (Sway) 557 runs
Top bowler: Robbie Stammes (Ferndown Wayfarers) 43 wickets

County 3 North

Champions: East Woodhay
Top batsman: Richard Please (Liss), 658 runs
Top bowler: Richard Dando (East Woodhay), Mark Dibben (Littleton & West Hill) and James Taylor (Redlynch & Hale) 25 wickets.

County 4 North

Champions: Tichborne Park II
Top batsman: Kyran Munt (Odiham & Greywell), 663 runs
Top bowlers: Steve Curram (Medstead) 36 wickets

County 4 South

Champions: RAM
Top batsman: Mike Norris (Bidbury) 592 runs
Top bowler: Rob Norris (Bidbury) 24 wickets

County 4 West

Champions: Winton
Top batsman: Lance Harwood (Dinton), 678 runs.
Top bowler: Sean Tranter (Pylewell Park) 46 wickets

Regional 1 South

Champions: Shanklin
Top batsman: Mark Ringer (Shanklin), 676 runs.
Top bowler: Matt Lambourne (Shanklin) 26 wickets.

Regional 1 North

Champions: Stockbridge
Top batsman: Jonty Cooke (Stockbridge) 709 runs
Top bowler: Martin Patrick (Penton) 35 wickets.

Regional 1 West

Champions: Hythe & Dibden II
Top batsman: Shaun Marlow (Breamore) 709 runs.
Top bowler: Dave Marshall (Sway) 32 wickets

Regional 2 South

Champions: Southampton Community
Top batsman: Jonathan Brocklehurst (Havant) 617 runs



Lymington fourth team captain Chris Tollerfield won the Regional 4 South West batting award, with 635 runs.



Southampton Community II, Regional 2 South champions



Hythe & Dibden, Regional 1 West 2 winners

Top bowler: Fahad Ahmed (Portsmouth) 32 wickets.

Regional 2 North
Champions: Twyford

Top batsman: John Bance (Twyford) 646 runs.
Top bowler: Tom Ducker (Twyford) 46 wickets.

Regional 2 West

LOCAL CRICKET

IBM Hursley, Regional 3 North winners



Ferndown Wayfarers II, Regional 3 west champions



(Curridge), 41 wickets.

Regional 3 North
Champions: IBM Hursley
Top batsman: Martin Bearpark (Longparish) 473 runs

Top bowler: Adam Trivett (Sparsholt) 24 wickets.

Regional 3 West
Champions: Ferndown Wayfarers

PINK LOCAL CRICKET

awards winners



Wellow & Plaitford celebrated their HCL return with the Regional Division West 4 title



Ed Primmer collects the County Division 3 North title trophy – Tichborne Park's second consecutive championship win.

Top batsman: Eric Pearson (Verwood), 483 runs.
Top bowler: Alex Kang (Hyde), 27 wickets.

Regional 4 North East
Champions: Hook & Newnham Basics V
Top batsman: Jack Dancer (Whitchurch) 425 runs
Top bowler: Lawrence Baker (Liss) 32 wickets

Regional 4 South East
Champions: Ryde Cavaliers
Top batsman: Tommy Barton (Ryde Cavaliers), 570 runs.
Top bowler: Jack Taylor (Purbeck), 24 wickets.

Regional 4 North West
Champions: Wellow & Plaitford
Top batsman: Will Jones (Broughton) 434 runs

Top bowler: John Shears (Laverstock & Ford) and Mark Weaver (Wellow & Plaitford), 27 wickets.

Regional 4 South West
Champions: Milford-on-Sea
Top batsman: Chris Tollerfield (Lympstone), 635 runs.
Top bowler: Steve Thompson (Hythe & Dibden), 26 wickets.

Women's Division 1

Champions: Aldershot
Top batsman: Jo Harfield (Aldershot), 312 runs
Top bowler: Lucie Spooner (Aldershot) 27 wickets

Division 2
Champions: St Cross Symondians
Top batsman: Kim Healy (St Cross Symondians) 566 runs
Top bowler: Nicole Blaxland (St Cross Symondians) 17 wickets.

Red cards for cricket

from back page

Which levels of cricket will be affected?

The move will apply to all levels of competition from Test to village green, although it is a decline in standards at recreational level which prompted the change. A recent survey by Portsmouth University showed that 40 per cent of British umpires said that episodes of abuse made them question whether or not to continue umpiring.

What does Mike Brearley think?

The former England captain said this week: "This is to cover the most extreme cases of violence on the pitch really."

"In a survey done with umpires, 40 per cent of them said they'd considered giving up the game because of abuse."

"Anecdotal evidence from people who are familiar with leagues in parts of England tells us that the behaviour has got a lot worse."

"Umpires have to be respected, and given the best possible chance."

Any other quotes?

Committee member Ramiz Raja said: "This is a pretty drastic change to the Laws... it is the second or third tier which is causing a lot of stress, the club matches."

"It was felt that something had to be done, at that level particularly. It is just a deterrent."

What else has the MCC announced?

Bat edges will be limited to a width of 40 millimetres in an effort to prevent obvious mis-hits going for six and catches will now count if the ball strikes a helmet being worn by a fielder before being held.

The committee also reiterated a desire to see T20 cricket included at the 2024 Olympics and the introduction of a world Test championship.

However, opinion was split on whether Test cricket should revert from five to four days and it was decided that no rule change was needed regarding ball tampering following the controversial incident in the Hobart Test which resulted in a fine for South Africa captain Faf du Plessis.

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